

CINEFANTASTIQUE

January

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Pierce Brosnan,
Sean Connery's
spiritual heir.

007

TOMORROW NEVER DIES

SCREAM 2

DARK CITY

MR. MAGOO

THE POSTMAN

MOUSE HUNT

Volume 29 Number 9



FILMING "AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS"

CINEFANTASTIQUE



THE REVIEW OF HORROR FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, YOUR GENRE NEWS MONTHLY

CINEFANTASTIQUE is published each and every month, with issues jam-packed with the latest stories on the hottest films you want to see.

Don't miss our next issue (shown left), our cover story on the making of *BLADE*, the Marvel Comics movie adaptation starring Wesley Snipes as the sword-wielding vampire hunter. Our on-the-set coverage includes interviews with Snipes and screenwriter David Goyer, plus the history of the comic book character, featuring interviews with creator Marv Wolfman and Marvel Productions chief Stan Lee. Also featured is a look at Marvel's ambitious slate of feature film adaptations and an analysis of what's wrong with comics-to-film adaptations.

And also in the same issue, Wes Craven on directing *SCREAM 2*, the CGI effects of *ALIEN RESURRECTION*, filming Marvel's TV series adaptation *NICK FURY: AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D.*, an on-the-set report from Britain's fantasy/adventure *THE BORROWERS*, and a behind-the-scenes look at *GODS AND MONSTERS*, the film biography of James Whale.

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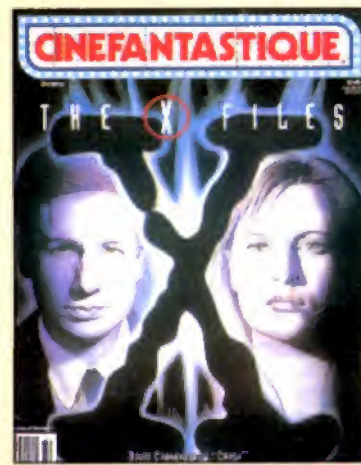
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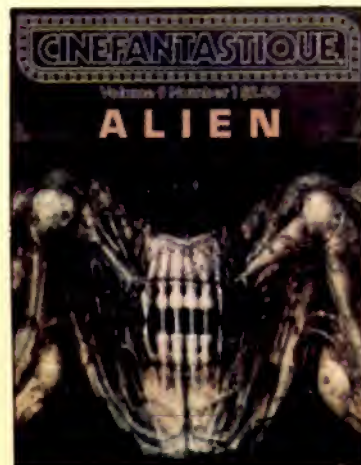


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CONTENTS

VOLUME 29 NUMBER 9

"The Magazine with a Sense of Wonder"

JANUARY 1998

Bond is back! And that spells excitement at the movies this Christmas. It also spelled excitement at the office, putting together this cover story on the filming of TOMORROW NEVER DIES, the eighteenth installment of the enduring James Bond saga. I'm up to see this movie! I haven't missed the opening of a Bond film since being thrilled at twelve by DR. NO in 1961. And whatever their relative merits (FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE is my favorite) I've enjoyed them all. For me, the Bond series has become over the years a primal movie-going experience. I know, come December 19, when I sit in a darkened movie theatre and hear the twang of the Bond theme, that my eyes will be as big as saucers and it'll be as exciting as it was when I was twelve.

Talk about thrills, London correspondent Alan Jones must have really had a kick visiting the set of the latest Bond outing and filing his report, including interviews with Pierce Brosnan, director Roger Spottiswoode and Bond villain Jonathan Pryce. Rounding out our coverage is a profile of Bond producer Michael G. Wilson and a look at how the character has departed from author Ian Fleming's inspiration and how the franchise has kept pace with the times. Despite naysayers who said the character wouldn't survive detente or the end of the cold war, Bond has become a '90s phenomenon.

A development as we went to press was the announcement by Sony pictures that they are set to launch a rival Bond series of feature films, partnered with producer Kevin McClory, who shares the Bond movie rights with the estate of Ian Fleming. McClory co-produced THUNDERBALL and also its remake NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN, which challenged the Bond empire once before back in 1983. Sony maintains that McClory's rights will allow them to do more than just re-make THUNDERBALL. If Sony's bid survives the expected legal challenge from the Bond filmmakers at Eon Productions, then we'll be seeing even more of 007, and sooner than expected.

Frederick S. Clarke



Page 8



Page 16



Page 38



Page 46



Page 52

7 DEEP RISING

MEN IN BLACK designer Carlos Huante on his latest monster work, developed with Rob Bottin and Dream Quest. / Article by Douglas Eby

8 SCREAM 2

Wes Craven returns to direct the sequel to the surprise hit from Dimension Films, starring Neve Campbell. / Article by Lawrence French

10 MR. MAGOO

Stanley Tong, hot Hong Kong director of famous action flicks, turns star Leslie Nielsen into the Jackie Chan of Magoos. / Article by Craig Reid

12 MOUSE HUNT

First-time director Gore Verbinski of Budweiser Frog fame brings a persnickety mouse to the big screen from Dreamworks. / Article by Mitch Persons

14 THE POSTMAN

Kevin Costner tests the genre waters again, directing and starring in a film based on David Brin's novel. / Article by Dan Persons

16 TOMORROW NEVER DIES

Pierce Brosnan and director Roger Spottiswoode reinvent James Bond for the late '90s. / Articles by Alan Jones

32 BABYLON 5

How J. Michael Straczynski takes BABYLON 5—and sci-fi TV—where no man has gone before. / Article by Frank Garcia

38 AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS

Director Anthony Waller (MUTE WITNESS) takes on the sequel to the John Landis cult classic, with Tom Everett Scott. / Article by Alan Jones

40 DARK CITY

Alex Proyas (THE CROW) directs William Hurt in a noir-sci-fi blend, opening at last after name changes and delays. / Article by Chuck Wagner

42 GENE RODDENBERRY'S EARTH: FINAL CONFLICT

Hopes are high a new series based on the STAR TREK creator's script will be his first non-TREK success. / Articles by Gary Kimber & Anna L. Kaplan

46 FULL MOON RISING

Low-budget producer Charles Band disputes reports of his company's demise with 3-D projects in the works. / Articles by Dennis Fischer

48 PRODUCER'S NETWORK ASSOCIATES

Canada's P.N.A. produce THE CUSP and THE DEADLY WAKE, proving that sometimes smaller is better. / Articles by Chuck Wagner & Gary Kimber

52 THE TERMINATOR & PHILIP K. DICK

Daniel Gilbertson's insider's view of how director James Cameron may have been inspired by the master. / Article by Daniel Gilbertson

56 CONAN, THE ADVENTURER

Former Mr. Universe and Schwarzenegger wannabe Ralf Moeller plays Robert E. Howard's pulp hero on TV. / Article by Scott Tracy Griffin

5 HOLLYWOOD GOTHIC

58 REVIEWS

62 LETTERS

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EAGERLY AWAITED

SPHERE (WB)

One of Michael Crichton's finest novels will finally sail to the screen—after spending nearly ten years adrift in the murky waters of studio development. Director Barry Levinson first became interested in the project after helming *DISCLOSURE*, based on Crichton's controversial novel, in 1994. *SPHERE* begins with the discovery of an immense spaceship, buried beneath a mass of coral reef on the ocean floor. Subsequently, a team of top scientists are brought in by the navy to evaluate the find. Once inside the craft, they discover the enigmatic sphere of the title. As usual Levinson has put together a stellar cast, led by his frequent collaborator, Dustin Hoffman (pictured with Sharon Stone). As Dr. Norman Goodman, Hoffman plays a civilian psychologist who has written a government-funded report outlining a suggested response to the scenario of Earth's first encounter with alien intelligence.

Stone plays a biochemist; Samuel L. Jackson is a mathematician, and Peter Coyote is the Navy officer in charge of the operation. Producer Andrew Wald predicts that *SPHERE* will set a new high-water mark for performances in a genre film. "The dramatic portion of the movie and all the interpersonal things that happen between the actors are way above the average science-fiction film," exclaimed Wald. "Barry Levinson was intrigued by doing a science-fiction movie, but not where the science-fiction was in the foreground. It will be more focused on the characters, who just happen to be scientists. It's all set in this fascinating habitat, which is a lab and living quarters, 1,000 feet beneath the ocean's surface.

Lawrence French

February 13



RELEASE SCHEDULE

Upcoming cinefantastique at a glance, along with a word or two for the discriminating viewer.

compiled by Jay Stevenson
(unless otherwise noted)



AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS (Hollywood) December 25

In what seemed like an impressive piece of corporate synergy, Hollywood Pictures (a Disney subsidiary division) pushed this film back from an October 3 release in order to take the place of *SCREAM 2*, which had been moved from this slot to January by Dimension Films (whose parent company, Miramax, was bought up by Disney a few years ago). Then Dimension threw a monkey wrench into the works by shifting *SCREAM 2* back to this slot. Buena Vista VP Chuck Biane told *Daily Variety*, "If *SCREAM 2* is ready, obviously one of us will move. But if they're not ready, we are definitely staying." In the meantime, the trailers for *AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS*, which was finished and ready to go, were running throughout the end of September to announce the original October 3 release date—which had already been abandoned! One has to wonder: by the time this film comes out, will audiences think it has already come and gone? SEE PAGE 38.

THE BUTCHER BOY (WB) Winter

Neil Jordan (*INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE*) directs this borderline effort about a small boy (Eamonn Owens) in an Irish town who retreats into the fragmented comic-book world of his dreams in order to escape the harsh realities of his real life. Stephen Rea co-stars.

DARK CITY (New Line) January

This futuristic film noir pushed back from 1997. Alex Proyas (*THE CROW*) directs Rufus Sewell, William Hurt (*ALTERED STATES*), Richard O'Brien (*THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW*). Jennifer Connelly and Kiefer Sutherland co-star. SEE CFQ 29:4-5.

MR. MAGOO (Walt Disney) December 26

Leslie Nielsen brings the animated character to life for Hong Kong helmer Stanley Tong (*SUPERCOP*), making his U.S. debut. Kelly Lynch, Ernie Hudson and Malcolm McDowell co-star. SEE PAGE 10.

NIGHT WATCH (Dimension) January/February

Sharp-eyed readers with long-term memory may recall seeing this film listed for an October release—October 1996, that is! Since then, it has been rescheduled several times; as recently as this summer, trailers were in theatres announcing a September 1997 debut. Now, the only official word is that the film should come out in the first quarter of 1998. (Coincidentally, a recent blurb in *Daily Variety* stated that Miramax, Dimension's parent company, was showing their confidence in the film's director, Ole Bordenthal, by purchasing a new property for him to direct. If they really want to show some confidence, maybe they should release his movie!)

THE POSTMAN (WB) December 26

Kevin Costner directs and stars in this post-apocalyptic thriller, which was adapted by Brian Helgeland (*L.A. CONFIDENTIAL*) and Eric Roth from the novel by David Brin. SEE PAGE 14.

SCREAM 2 (Dimension) December 12

This film was pushed back to January when it seemed that more time would be needed for its completion; after screening the rough cut, however, Dimension reinstated its original December 12 release date and announced their intention of securing a 3,000-screen opening that could cost up to \$20-million in prints and advertising—double what was spent on the original.

STAR KID (Trimark) January 16

You've seen it in the Release Schedule for months, under the title *WARRIOR OF WAVERLY STREET*; but Trimark kept postponing. Maybe they will finally release it, now that they've come up with a title that will fit on a marquee easier (or perhaps they were scared off by the weak box office of *WARRIORS OF VIRTUE*).

TOMORROW NEVER DIES (MGM/UA) December 19

Pierce Brosnan returns as Bond—James Bond. Jonathan Pryce, Michelle Yeoh, and Terri Hatcher co-star for director Roger Spottiswoode. If the film lives up to the advance footage, this could be the best Bond film in years. SEE PAGE 16.

LITTLE PEOPLE, BIG FILM

THE BORROWERS (Polygram)

After being a successful BBC television series, *THE BORROWERS* is coming to the big screen courtesy of Working Title (the company behind *FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL*). The \$30 million film is being headlined by *THE FLINTSTONES'* John Goodman (pictured). Peter Hewitt—who brought *BILL & TED'S BOGUS JOURNEY* to life—directs the comedy action-adventure being touted as "the biggest British family film to be shot in the United Kingdom since *CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG* almost 30 years ago." Rachel Talalay, the director of *TANK GIRL* and *GHOST IN THE MACHINE*, produces *THE BORROWERS* on behalf of Working Title heads Tim Bevan and Eric Fellner. *THE BORROWERS* are a family of four-inch people, consisting of Pod and Homily Clock and their two children, Arrietty and Peagreen, who live under the floorboards of a life-size house. The characters come from a series of children's novels which began in 1952 with *The Borrowers*, written by Mary Norton (author of 'Bedknobs and Broomsticks,' which was turned into a Disney feature in 1971). Because the BBC series had already covered the first book and *The Borrowers Afield*, the feature film is "based loosely on an amalgam of the books, capturing their spirit and taking the concept off into a much more action-adventure movie," according to producer Talalay.

February



HOLLYWOOD GOTHIC

THE MALE OF THE SPECIES

Producer Frank Mancuso Jr. tries to build his hit film into a franchise.

by Dan Scapperotti

The landing module of the first manned mission to Mars gently drops to the surface of the red planet. Astronaut Patrick Ross steps out onto the Martian landscape, and in an instant a new American hero is born. Completing his mission, Ross gathers soil and rock samples and returns to the mother ship. Everything seems routine on the return voyage. But something has changed. A deadly presence is on board and heading back to Earth.

With the success of his FRIDAY THE 13TH series still echoing in his mind, producer Frank Mancuso Jr. is attempting to turn SPECIES, his 1995 science fiction hit, into a new franchise. Intending to avoid covering the same ground trod by the original film, Mancuso decided to fashion a sequel that could stand on its own merits without the accouterments from the original. "I was approaching this movie more like an old serial than a traditional sequel," said Mancuso. "In the Indiana Jones films he was the same, and maybe some other elements were the same, but it was a whole different story in a whole different place and time."



Although her character was killed off in SPECIES, Natasha Henstridge returns in SPECIES II, which also features a male version of the alien life form.

Helming the new film is director Peter Medak, who recently directed TNT's THE HUNCHBACK (based on Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*). Sil, the H.R. Giger-designed alien played by Natasha Henstridge, was killed off in the first assault on the human race. Although the actress returns in the new film, she plays Eve, a new manifestation of the human-alien life form who is a

prisoner in an elaborate laboratory where scientists try to discover a means of combating the creature. Also making encore appearances are Marg Helgenberger as Dr. Laura Baker and Michael Madsen as Press Lennox, whose on-again, off-again relationship gives the film what little romance it has. Newcomer Justin Lazard plays the ill-fated Patrick Ross, who is infected with alien DNA and begins to undergo a horrifying and deadly metamorphosis.

Since the story takes place in and around Washington, D. C., Mancuso decided to avoid the politics of studio filming and opted for the rolling hills of Maryland to set up shop. Outside a vast warehouse, a converted General Electric plant, sit the trailers that house the production offices, makeup, transportation, publicity and the other departments that pull the film together.

Inside, they've constructed an elaborate laboratory set which includes a glass-enclosed living space for the lovely captive inhabitant, Eve. Next to that domestic area is a more ominous enclosure the centerpiece of which is a chair appointed with restraints. A control room thirty feet above the floor looks down on the scientists and military personnel scampering below. An impressive array of corridors and elevators lead off of the scientific facility set. Close by stands a three-story barn which figure prominently in the finale. Another reproduction of the barn, this time only the second floor, sits on the warehouse floor alongside its brother. This set was created for easier filming.

Heading off the criticism laid at the feet of the CGI monster effects from the first film, veteran effects supervisor Steve Johnson is using more traditional methods to bring the two new monsters to cinematic life.

SPECIES II will be released by MGM this Spring

FANTASIA 2000

by Mike Lyons

In the late 1930s, Walt Disney poured a tremendous amount of time and money into FANTASIA. In the late 1990s, Walt's nephew Roy Disney is pouring a tremendous amount of time and money into FANTASIA 2000. Production on the "sequel" began in 1990, when it was decided to add 32 minutes of new footage to the classic.

This past summer, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that, despite the small addition, the new FANTASIA was fast becoming a troubled production. As its title suggests, the film will debut in the year 2000, a three year delay from its originally planned release. The *Times* article stated that FANTASIA 2000 may also join WATERWORLD and TITANIC as one of the most expensive films ever made. With only three of the six new segments completed, and two more years of production to go, the budget may reach \$100 million (the usual cost for an animated feature is \$60 to \$80 million).

The music selected for the new vignettes are Dmitri Shostakovich's "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," Igor Stravinski's "The Firebird Suite," Camille Saint-Saens' "Carnival of the Animals," and Edward Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance March" (which will be used as a vehicle for Donald Duck, like Mickey's role in "The Sorcerer's Apprentice.")

Another segment, set to Ottorino Respighi's "Pines of Rome," was screened for the press earlier this year. Directed by Hendel Butoy (co-director of 1990's THE RESCUERS DOWN UNDER), the scene depicted a "whale ballet" of sorts, in which whales rise up out of the water, taking flight in the night sky. The scene's brilliant blend of computer and traditional animation, along with its stunning artistry, was a positive sign, as it showed that any "excessive" time and money used on the film had been well spent.

In the *Times* article, Disney studios denied the \$100-million rumors. Thomas Schumacher, executive vice president of Walt Disney feature animation and theatrical productions, was quoted as saying that such rumors are from "people who just don't understand the concept of what we're trying to do with this movie."

Short Notes

Lawrence Fishburne (EVENT HORIZON) has signed on to co-star with Keanu Reeves in MATRIX, a science-fiction tale of 22nd century computers that keep humanity in bondage by using virtual reality to fool them into believing that they are experience life in the 20th century. ♪ Andy Vajna, co-founder of Carolco, is bidding on the sequel rights to THE TERMINATOR and TERMINATOR 2. Carolco produced the second film, which was sold off to creditors when the production company went bankrupt. ♪ Tri-mark has wrapped production on WES CRAVEN PRESENTS "CARNIVAL OF SOULS," the awkwardly titled sequel to the 1962 cult film. ♪ Speaking of Wes Craven: even before the release of WES CRAVEN'S WISHMASTER, Live Entertainment announced they were planning a sequel. ♪ In the wake of ARMAGEDDON and DEEP IMPACT, Mike Meyers (AUSTIN POWERS) has signed to star in yet another falling meteor movie. Titled METEOR, this one is a low-budget drama about three kids whose lives are changed when a huge meteor lands in their back yard. □

BOSS BUSTED!

Richard Edlund's Oscar-winning effects company goes out of business.

by Les Paul Robley

Following a 15-year history as one of Hollywood's most respected special effects companies, Richard Edlund's Boss Film Studios locked its doors on Tuesday, August 26, 1997, closing a glorious chapter in visual effects history.

"Employees knew things were bad," offered facilities manager Bill Klinger, one of the last of the 100-plus personnel still lurking about the stages, "but not that bad! Something had to happen; I don't know if it was the right thing. I was a little disheartened they couldn't make a go of the business."

Apparently, with the high overhead involved in running the large visual effects firm, there was simply not enough money to stay in business any longer. This came as a shock to many after the company had just completed work on several big-budget motion pictures: *TURBULENCE*, *AIR FORCE ONE*, and *STARSHIP TROOPERS*.

When asked why the company should close after so many successful years in the business, many (who wished to remain anonymous) hinted at the tremendous costs needed to support the expensive digital department. This included up to 60 Silicon Graphics computers, making the company too top heavy to stay afloat.

Edlund, a four-time visual effects Oscar winner and seven-time nominee, known for his ground breaking work on the *STAR WARS*



Richard Edlund on the set of *SOLARBABIES*. The effects guru's independent company closed up shop in 1997 after contributing to *STARSHIP TROOPERS*.

trilogy and *GHOSTBUSTERS*, told *Times* staff writer P.J. Huffstutter, "We're paying for today's projects with tomorrow's profits, and I can't keep going this way. We're averaging about \$20-million [in revenue] a year, and it's not enough to pay the lease, pay the staff, and still make a profit."

Visual effects supervisor Jim Rygiel is currently heading Boss's final project, a remake of Disney's *THE PARENT TRAP*, which incorporates cloning tricks similar to those in *MULTIPLICITY*, to duplicate the look-a-like twins. Rygiel explained, "The studio was too costly to maintain on a picture-by-picture basis. The overhead was too high, and there were not enough films to

keep everyone busy."

The final card was dealt when Edlund called employees into the screening room on Monday afternoon. Many thought something was up, especially when a similar meeting reportedly ended its television production division two years ago, laying off numerous personnel employed on television commercials. "They called us all into the screening room—we figured it was a 'things are bad' kind of meeting, but we didn't anticipate that the bottom would drop out," recalled one employee. "Richard was all choked up; it was like someone had died in your family." Some felt that Edlund had deserted the ship, and now it would be difficult for them to find work. Shaken 3-D animators once sitting serene within their cozy digital environments began calling other local effects houses to find jobs. A few submitted resumes to nearby Digital Domain and Sony ImageWorks, but these firms had likewise cut staff recently, sources indicated.

Ironically, all this occurred shortly after a Boss hiring spree to recruit new talent at the SIGGRAPH Computer Show in August. The company even held a cigar-bash party at an expensive Los Angeles club, making it appear that everything was digitally sound, and work had recently been completed on expensive remodeling to add new offices for its digital effects division.

Boss Games, the 40-person

Production Starts



CINDERELLA

Fox Family Films produces this adaptation of the classic Grimm Brothers' fairy tale, starring Drew Barrymore and Anjelica Huston. Andy Tennant directs, from a script he co-wrote with Susannah Grant and Rick Parks.

BARNEY'S GREAT ADVENTURE

Parents, be warned: the purple dinosaur is leaping from TV to the big screen. Steel yourself now to the fact that you will have to take your kids to see this, whether you want to or not.

BELOVED

Jonathan Demme (*SILENCE OF THE LAMBS*) directs Oprah Winfrey as a slave haunted by the baby daughter she killed years before. Danny Glover co-stars. Richard LeGravenese and Adam Brooks wrote the script, based on Toni Morrison's novel.

The Phantom II

by Dan Cziraky

Composer Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber has started work on a sequel to his international musical hit *The Phantom of the Opera*. With a working title of *Phantom II*, the new story will have the disfigured, demented musical genius following his beloved Christine to New York City and moving into the bowels of the old Metropolitan Opera House. There has been no word on whether the new show is based on *The Return of the Phantom*, the sequel novel written by French author Gaston Leroux following the success of Universal's silent adaptation of the book in 1925, starring Lon Chaney, Sr. *Return of the Phantom* was to have been filmed at Universal in the early '30s, with Chaney in the lead, but the actor succumbed to throat cancer before production could begin. If *Phantom II* is based on Leroux's novel, it will be the first production of the long out-of-print book. Meanwhile, the film version of Webber's *Phantom of the Opera* remains stalled while legalities concerning the rights are worked out. □

computer game division in Redmond, Washington, will be unaffected by the closure. But it is uncertain what will become of the studio's equipment, facilities and collectibles (e.g., models of the Spaceship Discovery from 2010: *ODYSSEY 2*, Sil from *SPECIES*, and the Alien dog creature from *ALIEN 3*). Boss had plans to auction off its equipment, but this has been postponed due to interest from other effects houses in leasing out the large sound stages.

Boss carries a slew of debts which it is trying to pay off. One creditor, Steve Thornton of Precision Projection, the firm responsible for the laser tracking used in *MULTIPLICITY* and *THE PARENT TRAP*, said his company was offered one-tenth of the \$5,000 owed for their work during the August preliminary testing on the Disney film. They decided to reject the offer and adopt a wait-and-see attitude.

As a final gesture of good will, ex-Boss employees chipped in \$20 each to take out a full page ad in *Daily Variety*, wherein they thanked Richard Edlund for his years of genuine service as the head boss of Boss Films, Edlund, who now has his own office with another studio, was unavailable for comment. □

DEEP RISING

MEN IN BLACK designer Carlos Huante on his latest monster work.

By Douglas Eby

Designing the main creatures for DEEP RISING—based on an initial concept of director Steve Sommers—was a joint effort of Rob Bottin (TOTAL RECALL, LEGEND, MISSION IMPOSSIBLE) and Carlos Huante (MEN IN BLACK; MIGHTY JOE YOUNG). Noted Huante, “Rob and I really worked hard on the design at night. He actually puts a lot of himself into his designs, and has a lot to say. I just assisted his vision. I also worked with Rob on designs for victims [of the creature’s attacks], and he and I worked everything out, along with other illustrators he hires. He’s very thorough with the design process.” Huante had worked briefly with Bottin on MISSION IMPOSSIBLE designing a makeup that was nev-

er used. “So many were cut out,” he said.

Hollywood Pictures opens DEEP RISING February 13, starring Treat Williams and Famke Janssen as monster hunters on the *Argonautica*, a luxury ship in the South China Sea, where lethal forces have emerged from the bottomless depths. In addition to Bottin’s monster effects, the look of the film was defined by production designer Holger Gross, with mechanical effects coordinated by Darrell Pritchett. Michael Shea at Dream Quest, now a Disney subsidiary, put together the computer team that animated Bottin’s tentacled design.

“Zis eez definitely not a feesh,” said Bottin of the creature concept in his best Jacques Cousteau accent. “We all decided the creature was not going to look anything like something

Wes Studi and Treat Williams on a monster hunt in DEEP RISING, bloody corpse designs by Huante and the Bottin staff.



A Dream Quest CGI technician works with Huante's design, developed with Rob Bottin and a staff of illustrators.

you would order in a restaurant dipped in tempura and served up with rice on the side. This creature is going to make Ursula [the ominous sea witch from LITTLE MERMAID] look like an appetizer.”

The decision was made to have all the creatures realized through CGI, though Huante said he thinks at the beginning of the project there was some talk of using animatronics. “That changed with the CGI trend that’s going on now,” said Huante. “And that’s fine, because Rob supplied [the CGI team] with a lot of sculptural stuff to work with. That gives the digital animators a lot of information. I did a little bit of the actual sculpting on this pro-

ject. The main guys who did that were Glen Hanz and Jim Kagel. They were on the film even before I was, and were fishing around for the design also.”

Noted Dream Quest’s Shea of the CGI work, “We used three different standing models for the head of the creature,” explained Shea. “but three models really became many because we could use bits and pieces from any one of them and interchange them like a giant jigsaw puzzle.” Shea, who personally spent over a year and a half on the project called it one of the most challenging jobs he and Dream Quest have ever undertaken. Together they created

continued on page 61

SCREAM 2

Dimension Films rushes the sequel to the company's biggest grosser to the screen.

By Lawrence French

"Sequels suck," according to several of the movie-savvy characters in SCREAM 2, so it seems surprising to hear screenwriter Kevin Williamson say SCREAM 2 is a more mature and sophisticated script than his maiden effort. "Yes, SCREAM 2 is a sequel," said Williamson, "and yes some of the magic may be gone, because you can never read WUTHERING HEIGHTS for the first time again, but it's not just a re-hash of SCREAM. It's a continuation. The first film was sort of hip and fun, but this one has more of an emotional investment. Neve Campbell [who returns as Sidney Prescott], is nothing short of amazing. I think it will really surprise people."

Of course, it was no surprise when Dimension films rushed SCREAM 2 into production, since the original film has become the company's biggest grosser, tabulating well over \$100 million at the boxoffice. "It actually wasn't until the first one made around \$40 million that they started screaming for a sequel," recalled Williamson. "Once I got the go-ahead to write it, they wanted it done very quickly. I finished it in about 3 weeks, and then we worked on it in an ever-evolving process, which was a little worrisome for me, because we started shooting in June, and suddenly we were doing everything at once. It was different than the first film, where I turned in a script that was already done. This time, we had a big development process,



Craven directs Neve Campbell as Sydney in SCREAM 2, now a college freshman in the Midwest, but haunted by the same copycat killings.

which was new to me, and everyone got to put in their two cents. It was written against the clock, which was good, because I write well under pressure. Luckily, I already had the story mapped out. I would show Wes and everybody chunks of the script as it was done, then we'd all read it and talk about it. We all put our heads together, which is how we got a bunch of the twists and turns in the story."

Returning to the helm of SCREAM 2 will be Wes Craven, although two of the director's key collaborators, cinematographer Mark Irwin, and production designer Bruce Miller, have been replaced. SCREAM 2 also shifts the story from Sidney Prescott's hometown of Woodsboro, to a University town in the Midwest, where Sidney is already in her freshman year at college (as a drama student). Horror film fa-

natic Randy (Jaime Kennedy) is also attending college (as a cinema major). Meanwhile, Cotton Weary (Liev Schreiber), the falsely accused murderer of Sidney's mother, has been freed from jail, making him a prime suspect when the ghost-masked murders begin anew.

"Sidney was trying to get as far away from Woodsboro as she could," explained Williamson, "and she just wanted to disappear, so what better place to go than the Midwest. They let Cotton Weary out of prison and he disappears, then reappears in a very mysterious way. I can't reveal much more, because I've got [Miramax president] Bob Weinstein hanging over me, and he won't let me say a lot. They've got me so tight-lipped, I can't say anything! We're trying to keep a lid on the plot as best we can. With the first SCREAM

there was very little awareness of the film, but now it's all over the Internet and everyone's trying to guess the story. Early on, Bob Weinstein realized this would become a big guessing game, so when I sat down to write it, I came up with several different endings. There were several versions of the script, so you don't really know if what you've been hearing is true. The way I wrote the first movie, anything can happen, so we're not sticking to the rules."

One rule Miramax is sticking to, is the unimaginative tradition of simply putting a number after the film's original title. "The working title was SCREAM: THE SEQUEL," noted Williamson, "but I've long since stepped out of naming the movie. When I wrote the first movie, I came up with the title SCARY MOVIE, but I knew it would probably be changed. I planned to call the second one, SCARY SEQUEL, but Miramax wants to call it SCREAM 2. It sort of fits, because it's simple, concise and very sequelish, which is the whole nature of the film."

Gale Weathers (Courteney Cox), the pushy TV reporter will be returning to the scene of the new murders, as well, and her best selling book based on the events in the first movie, has already been made into a movie called STAB. The film's opening sequence, with a nod to William Castle, will have college co-ed Jada Pinkett being stalked and terrorized by the new ghost-masked killer, while attending the premiere of STAB. The ac-



"Sequels suck," according to the teens in SCREAM, but screenwriter Kevin Williamson and director Wes Craven try to beat the odds December 12, bringing back the killer.

tion cuts between a Drew Barrymore look-alike who is being slain on-screen, while Pinkett is murdered for real in the movie theater. Casting the parts for the movie-within-a-movie offered some interesting cameo possibilities. Williamson noted, "You could have Skeet Ulrich playing himself, or having him play Johnny Depp, playing Skeet Ulrich. There were all sorts of fun things we could do." Although Wes Craven reported that Ulrich visited the set, Williamson coyly refused to confirm if he will be part of the cameo casting. However, Tori Spelling has been confirmed as playing Neve Campbell's character in STAB.

One of the obstacles inherent in making good sequels, is the expectations of both the studio and audiences, who generally demand a re-play of elements from the first movie. "That's true," admitted Williamson, "but more than anything people want a good movie and that's what we tried to deliver. We told a new story, that has a lot of the spirit of the first film, but we added a bunch of new ingredients that will make it seem fresher. It won't seem so tired as most sequels you come across. I was really looking forward to SPEED 2, but that was a disappointing sequel, because they had such a good set-up, and it just didn't work."

Another of the flaws common to most sequels, is the lack of continuity from one film to the next. Moviegoers are invariably disappointed

when characters have been clearly established doing one thing, that is contradicted (or seems highly improbable), in the sequel. For instance, it may take a big leap of faith to readily accept how all the main principals left alive at the end of SCREAM could so conveniently show up at a college town in the Midwest. "We explain all that," said Williamson. "It's all very deliberately set-up. There's no cheating involved. Everything matches what happened in the first film, and it's all very satisfying."

Besides Sidney, Gale, Randy, and Cotton Weary all migrating to this new setting, it seems that Deputy Dewey (David Arquette) will also show-up, having retired from the Woodsboro police force. New characters will include Jerry O'Connell (SLIDERS) as Sidney's college boyfriend, Sarah Michelle Gellar (BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER) as Sidney's college pal, and Timothy

Courteney cox is back as pushy TV reporter Gale Weathers in the horror sequel which Miramax hopes can duplicate the December success of the original with new plot twists.



KEVIN WILLIAMSON

"People want a good movie and that's what we tried to deliver. We told a new story that has the spirit of the first film but added new ingredients that will make it seem fresher."

Olyphant as a film major whose expertise rivals Randy's.

Although the success of SCREAM has made Williamson a millionaire, he claims he will be turning his back on horror films from now on. "I never intended to become some sort of horror movie specialist," maintained Williamson. "I really don't have any more horror movies left to tell, although Miramax sort of expected that from me. I was very frustrated by that, so I accepted an offer from Columbia television to do a television series, DAWSON'S CREEK. It's a sweet coming of age story, about a young boy in love the girl next door. Once Miramax saw that, they said, 'Hey, your not just a horror guy, and said I could tell any story I want. I've just signed a big deal with them, where I'm going to be doing all my films and another TV show exclusively for Miramax.'"

Strangely enough, Williamson has already completed enough work in the horror genre to firmly typecast him as a "horror specialist." Besides his scripting the fall release, I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER, Williamson has written another teen horror film, THE FACULTY, and will soon make his directing debut with a black-horror-comedy, KILLING MRS. TINGLE.

Williamson is also committed to pen the screenplay for SCREAM 3, and has done a story treatment for HALLOWEEN 7.

"The reason I got involved with HALLOWEEN 7 is because Bob Weinstein asked me too," explained Williamson. "Also, the first HALLOWEEN is my favorite film of all time. So how could I refuse an offer to become involved in the final HALLOWEEN sequel? I wrote the story for it, and I don't know how they could possibly do another one. Jamie Lee Curtis is very close to signing on for it. In fact, Jamie Lee and I sat down and worked out the story together. She created the original character, and she gave me a lot of ideas on where her character is, 20 years later. I met Jamie while we were shooting DAWSON'S CREEK in North Carolina. Steve Miner was directing an episode of DAWSON'S CREEK and he had also done DYING YOUNG with Jamie. She was on the same lot shooting VIRUS. Steve introduced us, and we started talking about HALLOWEEN 7. I took a lot of her ideas about where she thought it should go and put it in the treatment. Then I faxed it too her and we talked it over. She hadn't seen SCREAM, because she doesn't see scary movies, but she had heard she was a running gag throughout the film. I don't go see horror films anymore, either. When I was a kid I liked them, but I don't go too much, these days."

Williamson spoke to John Carpenter about returning to direct the final HALLOWEEN sequel, just as Wes Craven had done on NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, but Carpenter wasn't interested. "He didn't get it," said Williamson. "He just didn't want to be a part of it. We talked a couple of times, but now that I'm out of horror movies, I don't think we'll be working together." □

MR. M

Premier Hong Kong action director

By Craig Reid

Who could ever have imagined that one of the premier action directors of Hong Kong, a director who introduced Jackie Chan to mainstream America in *RUMBLE IN THE BRONX*, *SUPERCOP*, and *FIRST STRIKE*, would make his Hollywood directorial debut on Walt Disney's latest, live-action, cartoon-inspired franchise, *MR. MAGOO*? Certainly not Stanley Tong. "Excuse me?" That's right, "Mr. Magoo" is going to be a Hong Kong action-style family flick. The vision of MA-



Director Stanley Tong rehearses Leslie Nielsen as Magoo with his Eggplant-mobile in the background. Left: The UPA cartoon character.

Kwai-Lai, he began studying Hung Chuan kung-fu, tai-ji and kickboxing at 12. At age 17 he attended school in Canada. In 1979 he returned to Hong Kong to help with the family business and then became a part-time stuntman for Shaw Brothers. Over the next three years Tong performed hundreds of stunts, doubling for many actors such as Michelle Khan, Maggie Cheung, Chow Yun Fat, and Brandon Lee. As is typical in Hong Kong, he worked his way up to assistant stunt coordinator, stunt coordinator and then in 1991 he executive produced, wrote, stunt coordinated and directed his first commercially successful film *STONE AGE WARRIORS*, a breathtak-

the hook and the studio said okay."

The first "Mr. Magoo" cartoon was made in 1949 and went on to become a sort of quasi-hero in the hundreds of theatrically released cartoons that soon followed. In 1960, *MR. MAGOO* became a syndicated television series, moved to NBC for one season, and from 1977-79 had a stint on CBS. And of course *MR. MAGOO'S CHRISTMAS CAROL* is a holiday fave that sadly can only be seen on the Disney Channel and not on the networks as it used to be.

Leslie Nielsen stars as the nearsighted, canned vegetable magnate Quincy Magoo. With the help of his trouble-shooting bulldog Angus, Magoo myopically foils a jewel heist, shortsightedly swindles the world's most notorious riffraff and with the vision of a bat in a headlight, wings cupid's arrow at his nephew Waldo (Matt Keelsar of *SOUR GRAPES*) who looks a lot like the guy you search for in those "Where's Waldo" games. Also featured are Kelly Lynch (*VIRTUOSITY*) as the lovely and ruthless international jewel thief Luanne Leseur. Stephen Tobolowsky (*GROUNDHOG DAY*) as the accident prone FBI agent Chuck Stupack, Ernie Hudson (*CONGO*) as the slick CIA operative Gus Anders, and Malcom McDowell as the mastermind behind the heist.

Directing a *MR. MAGOO* film seems a far cry from Tong's background, when you consider the ultra-violent nature of Hong Kong's over the top action and fant-Asia genre films. Born in Hong Kong as Tong

ing, violent, exploitation adventure starring the alluring Elaine Lui, who journeys into the New Guinea jungles to find her missing father. The film began Tong's penchant for showing outtakes at the end of his movies.

"I like to use outtakes because I feel pity for the crew," he said. "They work hard and then when the credits role, they vanish. With outtakes I can at least keep them in the movie and can show the fun and hard work of something that the audience doesn't see on screen."

Even before *STONE AGE WARRIORS* Tong did *BLOOD OF THE BLACK DOG*, a film that starts off as a tender Disney-type sopfest following the loving relationship between a young girl and her uncle. However, after the ritualistic slaying of the family dog, things get bizarre as ghost and demon terrorists unravel the basket where the last straw features a frightening crucifixion catenation.

How is this oeuvre going to fit into the Disney fold? "I don't like to do films that are about killing," said Tong. "Filmmakers have a responsibility to the public. When you do too much killing, revenge or glorify the villain and make them look cool, it has a bad impact on kids. I love and appreciate films like *BEN HUR*, *INDIANA JONES*, *SOUND OF MUSIC* and the action of Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd and Buster Keaton. I always want to find a film that the whole family can watch and have lots of action material with humor without shooting, death, explosions and car crashes. Ameri-



GOO star Leslie Nielsen doing a Jackie Chan impersonation boggles the mind.

In a thick but quite understandable Hong Kong English accent, Tong explained the leap from kung-fu to Magoo, "I was actually looking at a lot of scripts with John Woo-style action, gunshooting, explosions, cops and robbers, murders and that sort of stuff," he said. *MR. MAGOO* producer Myron was courting Tong to direct an action film. At the same time executive producer Hank Saperstein, who tied-up the Magoo rights, caught a screening of Tong's *RUMBLE IN THE BRONX*. He liked the look of the action and basically said to Myron, recalled Tong, "Why don't we do *MR. MAGOO* not just as a comedy but as an action movie? We are looking for a Hong Kong action director with a sense of humor, so talk to Stanley Tong." Myron had just met me. There was

MAGOO

makes his Hollywood directorial debut.

can action is different from Hong Kong, and my Hong Kong action is different from Hong Kong movies because it is based on comedy. I changed Jackie Chan's character to become more like a reluctant hero so he jumps across a building not to prove his bravery but because he has no choice."

When Tong came aboard MR. MAGOO had the tone of a NAKED GUN gag fest. "What attracted me to the project was that it was a Walt Disney film, a company that does non-violent, family pictures. I like the character Mr. Magoo. In his world he doesn't see danger and that is what I like about him as a character. His vision is totally wrong but he believes it to be right and so I can make use of this to play a lot of humor as well as action into the movie because of it."

Tong sees the action humor of Magoo to have universal appeal. "This kind of humor can translate into the international market," he said. "Verbal comedy doesn't always translate well. Physical comedy everyone understands. The studio let me help rewrite the script [Pat Proft was the screenwriter], it is filled with physical comedy." Tong insisted that Leslie Nielsen and Kelly Lynch do their own stunts and they gladly complied.

Tong shot the film on a budget of \$35 million, with 72 days of principal photography and 15 days of second unit work. Noted Tong about Hong Kong's different working methods, "Here you give the action to the second unit director but I talked to the studio and convinced them that since I am known for action what's the point of leaving the action directing to someone else? So I did my own action and could do it the way we do it in Hong Kong, without using master shots. So when I am looking at my dailies, I already know how I can edit the action because I don't have to worry about editing points and it doesn't require days and days of everybody practicing everything to get it exactly right."

Tong saw his biggest challenge as work-

DIRECTOR STANLEY TONG

"Filmmakers have a responsibility to the public. When you do too much killing, revenge or glorify the villain and make them look it cool, has a bad impact on kids."



Magoo and his faithful dog, resting after working with action director Tong, who infused the comedy with the same kinetic frenzy his Jackie Chan movies are known for.

ing out the physical comedy and stunts with Nielsen. "He's not a Jackie Chan and he's over 70 years of age," said Tong of Nielsen. "He has a lot of action sequences and I want it to remain my own style so when the audience is watching my movie they can still get the flavor of a Jackie Chan movie. So I put in action sequences for him and it just took me more time to shoot. Even though here I've less shooting time, more money goes into other aspects of the film. I had a lot of privacy to shoot on location and things like police-assisted road blocks was really a big help. In Hong Kong we have no permission to shoot on the street so for action we have to do it hit and run. Explosion and run. But we always get caught and sued."

What did Tong get away with on MR. MAGOO? Well, Nielsen, who joked that at his age (71) he needs a stunt double when he drinks a cup of coffee, constantly impressed Tong by doing his own stunts, which includ-

ed skiing on an upside-down ironing board while being towed by a snowmobile and walking off the back of a moving five-ton truck onto a forklift lowering its pallet. Lynch on the other hand used her dancing background to throw herself six stories down a rope and swing into a space upside down, parachute from a helicopter and narrowly escape from an unwanted trip over a waterfall.

Since vegetables are Mr. Magoo's fixation, it only makes sense that the obligatory chase scene featured a car chase between an eggplant-mobile and Magoo's Studebaker through the busiest intersection in Vancouver. It took one week to film. The final waterfall, helicopter and river raft sequence was filmed at the breathtaking Cataratas del Iguazu waterfall on the border of Brazil and Argentina.

What makes Tong a refreshing addition to the Hollywood community is that he tackles each film like his first, with the feeling of a little kid in a toy store, where everything is magically challenging and he doesn't feel

that he is competing against his fellow Hong Kong directors now setting up shop in Los Angeles. "You know all directors compete, but we are really competing against the whole world and not at an individual level," he said. "Disney has really given me a lot of room to operate in [something that Jackie Chan never had]. Throughout the whole shoot I only got two phone calls from the producer. One was to give me support because of the weather. It was raining all the time and he allowed me to go over a day without adding that into my budget. And the second call was to ask me if I was interested in directing INSPECTOR GADGET. I'm not sure at this point if I will."

Tong, based in Hong Kong where his family lives, still has projects for Golden Harvest and Jackie Chan. He hopes people come away from MR. MAGOO with a message. "If you have a good heart, no matter how dangerous things get, you can feel that God is always with you." □

MOUSE HUNT

First-time director Gore Verbinski tackles Dreamworks fantasy.

By Mitch Persons

The first fantasy out of Steven Spielberg's Dreamworks consortium opens December 19, nationwide, a comedy of Tom & Jerry-like mayhem filmed live with Nathan Lane and Lee Evans as down-on-their-luck brothers whose dream of striking it rich is thwarted by one pernickety mouse. Gore Verbinski, the wiz behind Budweiser's successful frog commercial, makes his feature directing debut, capturing the effects-laden cartoon quality of Adam Rifkin's script.

On the set at Hollywood's Raleigh Studios, Verbinski beckoned to a young man and woman standing at the opposite end of the stage. They come over, and as they get closer it appears as if the woman is holding a mouse in her hand. She places the little chocolate-colored mouse on Verbinski's shoulder.

"These highly capable folks are Sue Hanson and Boone Narr," Verbinski said. "They're the animal trainers on *MOUSE HUNT*. And this little creature," he explained, scratching the mouse's head, "is named Connie, and she's a jumper." An assistant came up from behind Verbinski and tapped him on the back. Verbinski tenderly handed the mouse back to Hanson, excused himself, and went off, presumably to oversee a shot.

"Maybe I had better explain just what a jumper is," Narr said with a laugh. "We have 65 mice that play the part of one. And we have different groups that do different things. We have a group that are strictly jumping mice, like Connie here, that can actually jump from a point of origin and land just about anywhere. And, we have climbers, sitters, and stay mice. We have a

mouse in the show that sits on Nathan [Lane's] shoulder and eats cheese. We have another one that crawls down Lee [Evans'] arm into his shirt, and Lee does this weird dance because the mouse is inside, and the mouse comes out his pants leg and runs across the floor."

Narr, who has trained chimpanzees for the film *BUDDY*, and whose dog Murray regularly appears on *MAD ABOUT YOU*, grinned slyly. "We've also done some things with these mice that nobody has ever done before. The mice are performing everything from retrieving to turning on a radio."

Added Hanson, "It took a long time to get them to do these special tasks, almost a year and a half, but it was worth it. We're very proud."

When the tasks become a little too difficult for live animals to do, visual effects pro-

ducer Jenny Fulle (of *APOLLO 13* and *ERASER*) steps in. Fulle, an ingratiating, enthusiastic person, practically glows when she talks about her job on *MOUSE HUNT*. "On this particular film," she said, "it's my function to supervise the 2-D shots and also serve as a liaison between Rhythm & Hues, who are doing all the 3-D mouse effects, the Stan Winston Studios, who are doing the animatronic work, the animal trainers, and the producers. I also do some budgeting and scheduling, so I'm involved in just about every facet of the production.

"Perhaps the most challenging thing we have to work on, though, is deciding what kind of animal to use for what shot. The animatronics are primarily used for close-ups, the real animals are used for wider shots, and CG is used when the mouse is doing those things that a

live mouse just doesn't do, such as certain facial expressions, which are human, but not quite."

Taking a genuine delight in presiding over the CG work is Charles "Charlie" Gibson, who is the visual effects supervisor for Rhythm & Hues. "This is a *big* film from a special effects standpoint," said Gibson. "You wouldn't think it, but there are so many techniques being used in the film it almost makes your head swim. It takes a team of really dedicated people to make a film like this work. Gore, unlike a lot of directors, has had a lot of hands-on experience doing digital effects. I can bounce things off of him, and he'll understand what the final product will look like based on my suggestion. He's also very closely involved with anticipating post-production work. Many directors will not spend enough time on the visual effects shots or not shoot them



Stan Winston's effects group sets up a blue screen shot of the animatronic mouse which doubled for the trained rodents for complex action.



Brothers Lars (Lee Evans) and Nathan Lane as Ernie (r) get defeated once more by a wily mouse that stands between them and their inheritance, opening December 25 from Dream Works.

according to plan. Taking those elements and making something useable and presentable out of them usually falls on the visual effects supervisor's shoulders. And that's what's really been terrific about Gore. He makes sure that the effects are shot with consideration for the CG and animatronic work, and that's a big help to everyone on our production team."

Part of that team is a group from the Stan Winston Studio, who are holed-up in a trailer outside the soundstage. Walking into this single-wide trailer, it is a bit of a shock to see that it holds so many people and animatronic set-ups. There are enough remote control devices lying around to make any radio-operated car enthusiast drool. At one end of the trailer is what appears to be a monstrous mouse impaled on a pole. At the other end is a metal structure that somewhat resembles a cat skeleton, and beside it, a hideous, leering, cat's head.

Puppeteers Paul Mejias and Linette Eklund are rehearsing with the giant mouse. Paul uses one of the remote controls. "This mouse is going to be used for the close shots," said Mejias. "It's built to 4.5 scale, and uses cable control, radio control, and hand control. I do the remote work, and Linette controls the gross body movements with her hand inside the torso, through its back end."

Added Eklund, "It actually takes six people to control every function at the same time. The cable controls are for the tail, gross head movements,

and the radio controls do the eyes, ears, nose twitch, mouth, and arms."

Jon Dawe, who co-designed the mouse's facial movements, noted, "The head was constructed as a completely separate unit. Chris Shane and I, who were partners on *THE LOST WORLD*, are responsible for that. The producers wanted the facial features to be able to be distinguished as a fully natural mouse; to be able to cleanly cut from a real, live mouse and blend into our mouse."

Operating the rather benign facial features of the mouse looks like a picnic compared to operating those of Catzilla. One eye is frosted over with a cataract, and its forehead is traversed by a jagged scar. It is so fearsome it might even make someone who knows it is just a puppet keep his distance.

"Yes, he's pretty mean-looking," said

Animal trainer Boone Narr with some of his tiny proteges, duplicating the manic action of a Tom & Jerry cartoon—live.



“We’ve done some things with these mice that nobody has ever done before, from retrieving to turning on a radio.”

—Boone Narr, animal trainer—

Catzilla designer Richard Landon, "What is on display here is what we call Catzilla's extreme roar face. He also has a more neutral bad-guy expression. He's a bad guy from start to finish. But he gets what's coming to him. By the time the little mouse is done with him, he's been hung from a chandelier, coated in mousetraps, and put through every other humiliation no cat would ever want to go through."

For these shots, both the body of Catzilla and that of the mouse are mounted on telemetry units. "Each telemetry unit," noted Landon, "is built to the animal's physiology. The units are operated by these remote devices, like the one that's over there on what looks like a candy-vendor's lap tray. For the mouse, the device has two small aluminum posts coming up with miniature aluminum mouse arms with position sensors in the arms which transmit through receivers to the mouse. Whatever is done at the puppeteering end with the little miniature aluminum arms, the actual creature arms will do the same thing.

"We have a rig similar to that for Catzilla. As you can see, the tail is pointed back toward us. That's a long post with a series of electronic sensors on it. The center body portion is mounted down to the table, and the head portion is a single handle coming out of the front. The puppeteer grabs a handle representing the head, a handle representing the middle of the neck, and by moving those can get coordinated motion translated out to the puppet. It sounds complicated, but it's actually a very simple process."

There is a squeaking sound from the far end of the trailer, near the rear door. Bent over a small television monitor are puppeteer Christian Colquhoun and the creature effects supervisor for the Stan Winston Studio, Shane Mahan. The two men are busily watching the grooming antics of a videotaped live mouse.

"This is real mouse reference," Mahan explained, "movement that we use for working out some of our performances." For comic references no doubt Verbinski had a monitor cued-up somewhere with the best of Hanna Barbera's legendary cat & mouse cartoons. □

THE POSTMAN

Award-winning author David Brin's story directed by and starring Kevin Costner.

By Dan Persons

THE POSTMAN may be David Brin's first novel to make it to the big screen, but the Hugo and Nebula award-winning author professed no illusions about what to expect. "Books and movies are entirely different media," he said. "Any author who expects to see his book rendered in all of its grandeur and texture and thoughtfulness is either a fool or blessed like W.P. Kinsella, author of FIELD OF DREAMS."

In this particular case, Brin might consider himself more blessed than not. While THE POSTMAN—the film coming out of Kevin Costner's Tig productions, distributed by Warner Bros. and starring and directed by Costner—has surrendered much of the book's West Coast-spanning *mise en scene* and a healthy portion of its hero's melancholy introspection, the screenplay holds onto enough of the author's key themes to make Brin sound rather satisfied as he discussed the project: "I think Brian Helgeland's screenplay has done a wonderful job of restoring some of the hope and goodness that were missing from the early draft [written by Eric Roth]. Besides, nobody depicts the good-guy better than Kevin Costner."

Yeah, but what a good-guy. In Brin's envisionment of the post-apocalyptic near-future, the Postman is part aesthete, part con-man, part minstrel who travels the newly feudalized villages of the American northwest, scrabbling what living he can through patchy reenactments of Shakespearean plays and a reliance upon the dubious gratitude of his audience. When he stumbles upon the wreck of a postal truck—its driver long-dead and its undelivered contents still intact—the jacket and sack wrestled off the corpse provide him with more than a welcome respite from the biting cold. At first faking the role of mail-carrier for "the Restored United States" in the hopes of a more favored seat at the communal dinner table and the occasional warm bath, the Postman



A man and his horse: Costner as the Postman, picking up the pieces in post-holocaust America.

soon finds his play-acting taking on dimensions he hadn't anticipated, pretense gradually spinning into reality as the myth of his exploits grows and avid followers begin establishing their own delivery routes. In spite of himself, the Postman becomes catalyst for the genuine rebirth of America. He also becomes target for the Holnists, a group of violent survivalists who aren't exactly thrilled with this democratic threat to their power base.

Said Brin, "This is about something that a great many people of my generation, and many generations, grew up with: the fear that civilization—the props that hold us up, the gentle network of mutual obligations that keeps the roofs over our heads and food on our tables—might collapse at some point. What might happen then? Most books and films dealing with that question have exulted in macho, little-boy fantasies of violence in which the hero just engages in a glorified blood-bath. In fact, the only real survivors will be those who have some sort of community to rely on."

For a while, though, it seemed that

POSTMAN the film was going to forsake the theme of community in favor of those macho-boy fantasies. Rumors had it that the title character as portrayed in the earlier drafts was something of a bastard, not unlike the misanthropic—and similarly nameless—gill-man Costner played in WATERWORLD (which probably was enough motivation for those re-writes). Even with Helgeland's restoration of Brin's humanistic outlook, some elements of the book have been relinquished. "My bad guys were a little bit too complicated," the author explained. "I tried to talk about how feudalism has always reared its head in the past, and would rise again if we ever lost our power as citizens. This is a complex subject, more appropriate for a book."

Indeed, with the weight of the film's villainy now placed primarily on the shoulders of Holnist leader General Bethlehem, played by Will Patton, the Holnists themselves have lost some of the near-supernatural terror that attended their presence in the book. In a similar way, the Postman has been trimmed down in motivations: still capable of quoting fractured Shakespeare when the mood strikes him, he is of necessity less the conflicted intellectual constantly questioning his role in future history, and more the current-day action hero, complete with a pungent wise-crack for every occasion.

While the film's Postman doesn't cut as wide a swath in his adventuring as in the book—there's "nothing having to do with feminists, nothing having to do with augments, and no intelligent computer," according to Brin—Costner still found ways to turn his vision into a project whose budget ended up a not-inconsiderable, \$80 million. Locations included sites in Oregon, Arizona and Washington, with the most ambitious work being held for the construction of Bridge City—a suspended community (presided over by none other than Tom Petty) that was built along a dam in Metaline Falls, Washington. There are vast armies on horseback (accompanied by more than a



Reluctant hero: delivering the abandoned mail leads to righting the political order of a troubled land, literate SF visualized on a large canvas.

few insurance claims after the customary, action-film pyrotechnics spooked some of the locally-owned steeds) and elaborate battle scenes shot in some of the most beautiful scenery in America. "It will be a cinematic feast for the eyes," said Brin.

It will have to be. Costner flinched once when trying to style himself as the next Mad Max with *WATERWORLD*; he takes a considerable risk in trying the genre again so soon after that high-profile debacle. Not that he hasn't taken steps to avoid the pitfalls (or was that whirlpools?) that snagged him the last time: Helgeland's script goes to heroic lengths to style the Postman as a sympathetic, if somewhat desperate, character—all the way to having the guy engage in humorous dialogue with his pack mule and wistfully reenact old TV shows in front of a broken television set. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, Costner continues his tradition of stocking his films with a largely unknown cast: prominent will be Olivia Williams as the romantic lead, and Larenz Tate as a young villager so inspired by the Postman's advent that he takes up the task of mail-carrier himself. With Costner claiming the roles of director, producer (along with Jim Wilson and Steve Tisch), and actor, the star has also managed to clamp down on the publicity pipeline, taking a personal interest in the flow of information (and insuring, not coincidentally, that leaks about such things as editing-room coups will be damn hard to uncover this time around).

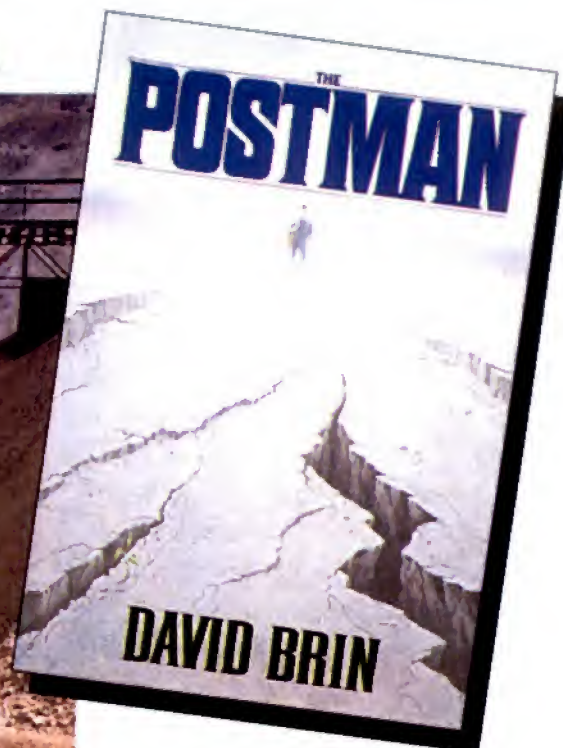
Meanwhile, David Brin isn't flinching at the clear analogies to *MAD MAX*. In fact, he rather welcomes them: "Most so-called *MAD MAX* [knock-offs] are pretty puerile, violent, and stupid. Oddly enough, that does not include the *MAD*

MAX films themselves. Those three movies I consider to be fairly intelligent, and at times even deeply moving. You get an impression that Mel Gibson's character, if he could give up his life in order to bring civilization back, would do so in a shot. The heroes in most such movies wouldn't even imagine such a possibility. [In watching] that beautiful, gentle movie, *MAD MAX BEYOND THUNDERDOME*, it almost never occurs to anybody to do a body count. Very few people are killed in that film; there are almost no bad guys. The final, great big, violent scene in which they're escaping on the train, Max doesn't kill any of the guys with Mohawks. Why? Because they're city cops, chasing him for a legitimate difference of opinion. It's a remarkably gentle film for that genre, and also somewhat thoughtful."

Brin has some thinking to do himself. With his stock in Hollywood considerably elevated by *THE POSTMAN* ("At this particular moment," he noted, "it's easy to do lunch"), the writer has received much interest for *The Practice Effect* and *Starline Rising*, the latter a Hugo and Nebula award-winner set in a future where starships are

piloted by dolphins. Still, the author doesn't forget that it took ten years for *THE POSTMAN* to make it before the camera, with everyone from Richard Dreyfuss and, it is rumored, Tom Hanks courting his favors before Steve Tisch finally ponied up the money for the rights. Of the Hollywood approach to SF, Brin said, "There is a widespread myth that science fiction films have to be stupid to be fun, no matter how often it's been proved [otherwise]. That's a pity. How many times must we see a cliché, four-star general, screeching with foam-flecked lips as he orders the death of some cute alien? A multitude of clichés are just waiting to be smashed, and people will enjoy it when it happens. "I can't predict [what the reaction to *THE POSTMAN* will be]. If any meaning from the book does get conveyed, people may, now and then, lift their eyes from the tensions, conflicts, and recriminations of daily life, look around this wonderful, gentle, decent, well-functioning culture of ours, and say to themselves: 'I am a member of civilization. That won't stop us from trying to overcome our many flaws. In fact, it may make us much better at that task.'" □

Bridge City, Tom Petty's fiefdom, built along a dam in Metaline Falls, Washington. Right: David Brin's Hugo and Nebula Award-winning novel.



007

TOMORROW NEVER DIES

Pierce Brosnan uses his GOLDENEYE clout to make an even better Bond.

By Alan Jones

Pierce Brosnan is now established as James Bond 007 in the eyes of the cinema-going public. After a six year sabbatical Brosnan kick-started the moribund Bond series with GOLDENEYE and saw it gross over \$350 million, nearly twice the total of any previous Bond production. TOMORROW NEVER DIES is the second adventure Brosnan undertakes in his three-picture contract as the suave, sophisticated Super Spy drawn from novelist Ian Fleming's fertile imagination. This time Bond is on the trail of a media mogul willing to trigger World War III to see a surge in his satellite TV network ratings.

"Of course I was gratified GOLDENEYE did so well," declared the handsome, 44 year-old Brosnan, "I would be a fool not to be. I was pleased and so proud because the stakes were so high and there was a lot of pressure on me to deliver. In many respects there's more pressure this time around because, having built the franchise back up to speed, you have further to fall should anything go amiss. Hey, that's just the nature of who I am personally and professionally. I'll always try and



Brosnan as Bond, with Teri Hatcher as Paris, a romantic dalliance in Bond's past and the wife of the media mogul that's out to start World War III.

find problems within a scene rather than keep it simple and have a good time. Because it's me. Because it's one of those things. I've got better at it as I've got older and I've calmed down a great deal since our nightmare beginning."

Brosnan is referring to the fact that TOMORROW NEVER DIES began production with its script in slight disarray. He explained further, "You can't take anything for granted in this business and this has been such a difficult shoot. It has been like pulling teeth at times. The studio wanted the film. They wanted it yesterday. It was important to them and, of course, it was important to me. They wanted it for a December release and we went out of the gates with the script not exactly in the finest of shape. The story was there....so it has been a long haul."

But the upside is that TOMORROW NEVER DIES has had its extremely enjoyable moments. Brosnan continued, "I've enjoyed working with director Roger Spottiswoode very much. He's giving it a great look along with Roger Elswit, the director of photography. It's markedly different from any other Bond, most definitely.



Pierce Brosnan has revitalized the 007 franchise, returning in his second Bond outing. Noted director Roger Spottiswoode, "And he looks great in a tux, too!"

You could tell the difference immediately; it's grittier, edgier and thrillerish in a noirish way. I've already seen 80 minutes of the completed film cut together and it really pumps along action-wise. Bond is what you got in *GOLDENEYE*.

"I'm still not sure about the story there myself! All those scenes about finding the key—who knew what the fuck they were about? This has an easier to follow story, a more credible

premise and a more somber beat within the Bond character himself. Yes, the gags and one-liners are still there, it's simply that the whole surround is a goodie."

Because he had made such an impact in *GOLDENEYE*, Brosnan was determined to use what clout that had given him during the pre-production process of the new adventure. He added, "Allowing for the fact that I had no choice but to

PIERCE BROSNAN

"In many respects there's more pressure this time around because, having built the franchise back up to speed, you have further to fall should anything go amiss."

make *TOMORROW NEVER DIES* because of my goddamn contract, I certainly added my two cents worth this time. I wasn't in at the very beginning because of making *MARS ATTACKS*, *THE MIRROR HAS TWO FACES* and *DANTE'S PEAK*, but I contributed as those pieces rolled on. I wanted a woman in the story to mean something to Bond, as opposed to some big-breasted broad. That turned out to be the Paris Carver character played by Teri Hatcher. It meant I had a few beats within that scenario to jump off dramatically into the rest of the plot. Bond loved Paris. She was someone he really cared for but he let slip away. They listened to me in that department. Look, I didn't come into the frame thinking, 'Right, now I'm going to completely change everything.' I've done it, been there, etc. That wasn't necessary."

Brosnan also said his bit about Spottiswoode, too. "I'd known him indirectly through director Nicholas [STAR TREK II and VI] Meyer and liked his work. We both agreed in our initial meeting that it was vital to retain what was already there, while wanting to see more character within the piece. You can have both; the explosions, the formula opening stunt, the premise set-up. It was my feeling we could play with the components more and offer a character-driven Bond as well. That way we wouldn't short-change the punters but make it more interesting for me as an actor. Everything you expect—with a twist. And Roger, bless his heart, has pushed it out there big time. It hasn't been agreeable to everyone concerned but it has been a pleasure for me. This Bond will be as different to *GOLDENEYE* as that one was to all those before it."

Not that Brosnan thinks the Bond character stretches him in

any way as an actor at all. He said, "It's what I do in between which does that. Bond is such a *big* character you have to do something else in between or else you'd go mad. I've seen Sean Connery live with it and I saw what happened to him as an actor. But then the Sixties was a different era. Also I like to work and Bond has opened up the field and certainly given me more choices. Bond meant I could go off and have a laugh with Tim Burton on *MARS ATTACKS*. Mixing and matching and trying to stretch myself is what it's all about. Barbra Streisand wanted my suave persona for *THE MIRROR HAS TWO FACES* and that's what she got because I thought it would be interesting to see how she operated. I was also in the company of some fine actors, like Jeff Bridges, whom I greatly admire. I made *DANTE'S PEAK* because director Roger Donaldson is a good mate and I grew up on those sort of epic movies."

Brosnan's co-star, Hong Kong's Michelle Yeoh, handcuffed for a chase scene that took nine days to film.





Brosnan, as Bond, takes control of a jet fighter. The actor used the boxoffice clout he gained from *GOLDENEYE* to influence *TOMORROW*, noting "You can have the explosions and offer a character-driven Bond as well."



dios. We couldn't use Leavesden again, where we filmed *GOLDENEYE*, because *STAR WARS* moved in. So we found another similar set up. I was thrilled to be filming in the 007 stage at Pinewood. A little bit of Bond history in the making there....it's the first time I've set foot inside it."

It was on the 007 stage where Brosnan and his Bond Girl star, Michelle Yeoh, filmed

the scene where 007 and Wai Lin are handcuffed together underwater for a gruelling nine-hour night shoot. "I love Michelle," said Brosnan. "She's great and we get on so well. It's so spectacular when she throws those legs of hers around me. They say we work well together and have the proper screen chemistry. She's given a refreshingly different angle to the Bond format too. She's not your

normal fare for a Bond-type female."

Being handcuffed together offered no particular problems, "Except when we were running because that's really hard. And in Thailand where it was bloody hot and miserable. Fighting on the back of a motorcycle was difficult and there's this sequence where we fly down this banner which goes on and on forever. There are more stunts

As usual, *TOMORROW NEVER DIES* scoured the globe in the never-ending search for exotic locations. Originally Vietnam was chosen to stand in as Beijing and China, but when the powers-that-be there proved less than keen to afford the Bond Machine the total cooperation needed for things to run smoothly, Thailand became the next best choice. Mexico, Hamburg, Florida and a shopping mall in Brent Cross (a north London suburb) were also ports of call for BOND 18 as it was called right up until its start date when a title finally had to be decided on.

Interiors were shot at Pinewood's 007 sound stage, especially built for *THE SPY WHO LOVED ME* back in 1977, and at the new Eon Productions studio facility at Frogmore in north-west London. Brosnan remarked, "We have this habit of spawning new stu-

Brosnan in action: battle scars included eight stitches on his left upper lip, a souvenir from a stunt gone awry.



PIERCE BROSNAN

“If TOMORROW NEVER DIES is a success—and I believe it will kick butt because it’s bloody good—there’s no reason why we couldn’t push it even further next time.”

here because it has a faster pace being a much more muscular film altogether.”

Brosnan pointed out a scar on the left of his upper lip: “No, Teri Hatcher did not cut my face off! A stunt guy whacked me and I had to have eight stitches. Pretty dramatic actually, but par for the course as sooner or later on a film like this you are going to have an accident.”

But the stunts aren’t the hardest part of the whole Bond experience as the forthright Brosnan explained. “You want to know what the hardest part is? It’s this stuff, constantly talking about it, and answering all your questions because it’s basically the same old thing. Look, I’ll go out and sell this movie as hard as I did GOLD-EYE. I have to do it. When you invest so much time and energy in something like this, you’d be shooting yourself in the foot by refusing to promote it. Yet I’m sure you’ll appreciate it’s tough to come up with new anecdotes and information your readers will find interesting every time.”

He added with a twinkle in his eye, “How about I see Bond in Jekyll and Hyde terms....It’s me and him, two sides of the same coin. And, no, I haven’t seen AUSTIN POWERS, although I’m dying to.”

Once those essential press junkets, premieres and personal appearances on TOMORROW NEVER DIES are over, Brosnan will concentrate on getting a remake of THE THOMAS CROWN AFFAIR off the starting block for his production company, Irish Dreamtime. He’s already produced and starred in one film for it—Eugene Brady’s THE NEPHEW, calling it, “A charming, romantic Irish comedy drama. Talk about covering your bases!”

Noted Brosnan about THE THOMAS CROWN AFFAIR, “It’s a film I’ve always loved

and it has a dangerous quality to it. I mean, remaking a Steve McQueen classic from 1968! It dovetails well with my Bond image because it’s about this urbane man who’s so bored with life, and has made so much money, he just wants to pull daring heists merely for the thrill of it all.”

Then it will probably be back to Bond for number 19. Brosnan sighed, “I have no expectations. I learned that very early on in this business. I’ll just carry on with my career as it unfurls before me. You can’t plan anything in this game. Each film has different stresses and strains and when you go into a 25 week shooting schedule like we’ve had on TOMORROW NEVER DIES it’s a wearisome patience tester where you can’t even see the next day before you.”

But Brosnan wants to work at keeping this Bond franchise evergreen. “I hope we keep ringing the changes,” he said. “If TOMORROW NEVER DIES is a success—and I believe it will kick butt because it’s bloody good—there’s no reason why we couldn’t push it even further next time. Why not have directors like Quentin Tarantino, John McTiernan or John Woo bring their own style to the Bond universe? That would entail going out on such a limb and I’m not sure the producers would be prepared to go that far. But wouldn’t it be exciting?”

“Or why not set Bond down in sleazy New York, or have the entire story take place in London? That would be something more intense and internal. Why does he have to keep battling these outlandish villains in glamorous parts of the world? He’s a secret agent for God’s sake. There’s no reason why he couldn’t have a simpler mission for a change. Let’s see how far my clout takes me next time around.” □



Brosnan strikes a classic Bond pose with Michelle Yeoh as Wai Lin. Many other traditional Bond features have been retained, including the requisite equipment briefing from gadget-master Q (Desmond Llewelyn).



007

ROGER SPOTTISWOODE, NOBODY DIRECTS IT BETTER

Giving the audience what it needs while reinventing Bond in a fresher way for any newcomers.

By Alan Jones

"I thought the first few James Bond movies were wonderful," remarked *TOMORROW NEVER DIES* director Roger Spottiswoode. "But I'd frankly stopped watching them until Pierce Brosnan came along. He's the best 007 since Sean Connery. No question. Timothy Dalton is very nice and all that but he was never comfortable with the role. As for Roger Moore...well, he was in some kind of alternate universe. The first movies had an edge to them which became more ludicrously fantasy-orientated as they went along. I don't think that route is a very interesting one. Director Martin Campbell made *GOLDENEYE* much more credible and stronger after that long six-year gap and Pierce was the first Bond to make me seriously think about the series again. Suddenly they worked when they so clearly didn't do so before."

The 18th Bond movie isn't the first brush with 007 the British director has had, though. He explained, "I talked to the Bond producers several years ago, before their lawsuit, but I really didn't know how to do it with Timothy Dalton. *LICENSE TO KILL* was too sombre a film for me to tackle. I like things edgy, not sombre. To be honest I didn't understand the tone Dalton was working in. Then they offered me this script. While it was never a burning ambition to direct a Bond movie on my part, if a



Spottiswoode rehearses Michelle Yeoh and Pierce Brosnan on the 007 stage at Pinewood Studios during the arduous nine-day shoot of their motorbike stunt chase.

great script did come along, I thought it would be terrific and a lot of fun."

But the script producers Michael Wilson and Barbara Broccoli first offered Spottiswoode was problematical, to say the least. "It was August, 1996, and the script was one the studio didn't want to make. The story was centered around the Hong Kong changeover from British to Chinese rule. However, the film would have had to have opened in May this year to have any immediacy value and there was no way we could have made the picture in such a short space of time. The whole concept had to be radically altered. Elliot Carver, the media mogul villain, stayed in the story but that was all."

In many ways, Spottiswoode was pleased the script was so

pliable. "It meant I could bring in lots of my own ideas so I wouldn't be completely absorbed by what's termed the Bond Machine," he said. "I also brought in production designer Allan [*STARSHIP TROOPERS*] Cameron who also did *AIR AMERICA* with me, director of photography Robert [*BOOGIE NIGHTS*] Elswit, Michelle Yeoh was my choice as the Bond Girl, plus I hired the French-Canadian editors. Left to their own devices, I think the producers would be happy making the same kind of Bond film they've always made. It's up to you as the director to make sure that doesn't happen."

Since his first film as director, *TERROR TRAIN* starring Jamie Lee Curtis, Spottiswoode has earned himself a growing

reputation for tackling a whole range of subjects from the gritty political drama *UNDER FIRE* to the mainstream comedy *TURNER AND HOOC*. His other credits include *THE PURSUIT OF D.B. COOPER*, *THE BEST OF TIMES*, *SHOOT TO KILL* and the television movies *AND THE BAND PLAYED ON* and *HIROSHIMA*. Prior to his directing career, Spottiswoode cut British documentaries and TV commercials before moving to Hollywood as film editor for the legendary Sam Peckinpah, late director of *THE WILD BUNCH* and *STRAW DOGS*.

"I don't shoot like Sam but I did learn a great deal from him," said Spottiswoode. "He knew all action was about character and none of it should be gratuitous. He would not have indulged in any of the sort of stuff you see in current action films. He would have despised it and been disgusted by what goes on today. The action he staged so wonderfully all came from his well-drawn characters' psyches."

That's what Spottiswoode is trying to do in *TOMORROW NEVER DIES* and its story about media power as a lethal weapon with the dangerous possibility that it could change the course of history. Noted Spottiswoode, "Trying to find a valid way of connecting a British spy to a large world problem is very difficult these days. Great Britain has become pretty much irrelevant during the course of the decades when



ROGER SPOTTISWOODE, DIRECTOR

“Brosnan’s made my job easier. He really understands the character exactly and won’t play fast and loose with him, yet he loves trying new things within pre-set boundaries.”

Spottiswoode was backed by Brosnan in shaking up the Bond formula to ground it more in characterization for 007, making the action less gratuitous.

Bond first started spying on behalf of his country. Britain has gone from being a marginal first world country to a middle rank third world one and it has all happened for real over the course of the Bond movies.

“I wanted to bring back the edginess the movies had lost but were starting to get back thanks to Martin Campbell and GOLDENEYE. During the ’80s, the Bond series had drifted off into the fantasy wilds relying too much on deep focus and high key resolution techniques. I much prefer them to have a reality base. Obviously the Bonds, by their very nature are fantasy-orientated, but I felt they’d become silly. I thought there was a way of bringing the whole concept back into an area that, frankly, other people had begun taking over—like James

Cameron and his TRUE LIES. Other people had moved into the genre Bond had created. They were doing them moodier and better while Bond had got lost. It was time for 007 to take his rightful place in the heightened reality world of recent action adventures rather than being so resolutely retro-’60s.”

For that reason, Spottiswoode felt it was vital that Elliot Carver be a credible villain. “Of course Carver is fictitious and slightly overdrawn as all Bond villains are, but not stupidly so,” he said. “I feel the audience will relate to Carver in a way that hasn’t been possible before. He’s not some daft eccentric doing incredibly impossible things with 25 big-breasted women in the middle of a volcano. He’s a fascinating character, somewhere between

the media barons we all know, like Ted Turner and Rupert Murdoch, but taken just a step further.”

The same credibility factor was also applied to Wai Lin, the Bond Girl in TOMORROW NEVER DIES. Noted Spottiswoode, “In GOLDENEYE the girls were on their way up in the scheme of things. I didn’t want voluptuous babes draped everywhere. I wanted a credible late ’90s woman who’s strong, smart, able, powerful and who wouldn’t want to take part in any kind of sexual fight. I needed an interesting and well-rounded colleague for Bond to bounce off. It was my nephew who insisted I see Michelle Yeoh’s Asian movies. Naturally, I was impressed with her incredible talent, fighting skills and looks, but I did make the decision to look at numerous other Hong Kong actresses as well.

“I saw Michelle first, then I saw about 30 other girls, and I came back to her to play Wai Lin because she seemed the most interesting choice. She’s completely convincing in everything she does because she does all her own stunts and that takes an enormous amount of

guts, quiet confidence and courage. Michelle is not just somebody acting a role—she is that person. You look at her and think, ‘How come this five-foot one-inch-tall actress, weighing 97 pounds, is so strong?’ I’ve become even more impressed with her as shooting has progressed.”

Spottiswoode also has nothing but praise for Pierce Brosnan. “Brosnan has made my job so much easier,” he said. “He really understands the character exactly and won’t play fast and loose with him, yet he loves trying new things within those pre-set boundaries. I’ll give you an example. There’s a car chase in TOMORROW NEVER DIES which has never been done before. I’d been thinking about it for a long time and it revolves around the notion of driving a speeding car with a remote control. Q’s latest piece of electronic wizardry for Bond is a BMW 750 which can be driven by a remote control disguised as a mobile phone. Every car chase usually has the driver in the driving seat, but here we put Bond in the back seat, have the steering wheel blow off in the first ten seconds, the front window shattered, and

Shaken and stirred: Spottiswoode and Brosnan give us a peek at the man behind the superman, but it’s not a sombre exercise like the Timothy Dalton films.



have our hero guiding the vehicle while being thrown all over the place.

"When Pierce first read the scene, he didn't get it because it read like any other car chase. But he hadn't seen the car at that stage. He was prepared to be bored by yet another tedious action sequence that takes three weeks to film and is condensed into a few minutes on screen. No, I told him, this is a real character scene as Bond finds a great deal of humor within the action. We drove him around the car park in the back seat, with his feet out of the rear window, and went so fast he couldn't position himself properly. His head got wedged between the two front seats, he tumbled everywhere and he suddenly saw how funny the scene could be. Then he rose to the occasion himself with lots of other Bond business and the sequence is now one of the major highlights in the film. Pierce is very open and instinctual when it comes down to it."



TOMORROW NEVER DIES has been an arduous task for all the cast and crew. The script wasn't ready come the April 1, 1997, start date of principal shooting, and this has had a knock-on effect with the entire movie. To make the Christmas 1997 premiere date, Spottiswoode has had the unenviable task of cutting the film in his lunch hours and after wrapping each evening. "It has been the most horrendous post-

ROGER SPOTTISWOODE

"TOMORROW NEVER DIES is not my personal journey, but if it's grittier, moodier, smokier, edgier and with a darker sense of humor than usual, I'll be more than happy."



Spottiswoode and Brosnan, keeping to the tried-and-true series traditions while trying to freshen up the routine. Spottiswoode's idea to cast action heroine Michelle Yeoh (left) added spice to the role of the Bond girl.



production schedule," he admitted. "Normally I'd have liked four months to fine tune it, condense, focus and perhaps find it anew in the cutting room. It hasn't been possible here, but I knew that going in. I've just had to grin and bear it. Whole reels of the film have been gone through already and I'm certain when I see the film in theatres this Christmas I'll know how to polish it further but I won't be able to.

"I've done this twice now. **TURNER AND HOOC** was a film I was asked to take over and start shooting again from scratch. The condition was it still had to be in theatres by a certain date. That film I previewed a week after wrapping. I'm used to these crazy schedules. In fact, I think it was working on **PAT GARRETT AND BILLY THE KID** with Sam Peckinpah that started this whole rush ethic in the first place. MGM needed that film in such a brutal hurry and were prepared to mangle it just so they could reach their agreed release date. Usually post-production is my favorite part of the process because joining pieces of film together is the best experience in the world. It's pre-production I can't stand as it's so boring negotiating money and dealing with all the other crap."

Because he has been editing as he goes along, Spottiswoode is unduly high on the already nearly finished product. He said, "Look, the only reason to take on a sequel is if you like the genre, admire the lead actor and would quite fancy putting your own seal on the movie. I can say yes to all those conditions. A Bond movie comes with so many expectations; there are so many people who know exactly how you should do it. The challenge is to have enough fun with it, yet possess the freedom to change it while remaining true to the fans' vision of what a Bond film should be. I have to give audiences what they need while reinventing it in a fresher way for any newcomers. **TOMORROW NEVER DIES** is not my personal journey, but if it's grittier, moodier, smokier, edgier and with a darker sense of humour than usual, I'll be more than happy." □

007

HEIR TO THE BOND LEGACY

Longtime Bond producer on the family heritage.

By David Giammarco

Look closely at the last 20 years of Bond films, and you'll see more than just the behind-the-scenes presence of longtime Bond producer Michael G. Wilson. Wilson has had cameo roles in every 007 film since *THE SPY WHO LOVED ME* and even made an appearance in *GOLDFINGER*, where as a 21-year-old student about to start law school, his late stepfather and Bond series creator Cubby Broccoli invited him to the Fort Knox location to help as a production assistant. Wilson wound up buying and supplying cases of beer for the non-actor American GI's recruited for the scenes where Pussy Galore's Flying Circus nerve gases the Fort Knox troops into an immediate slumber.

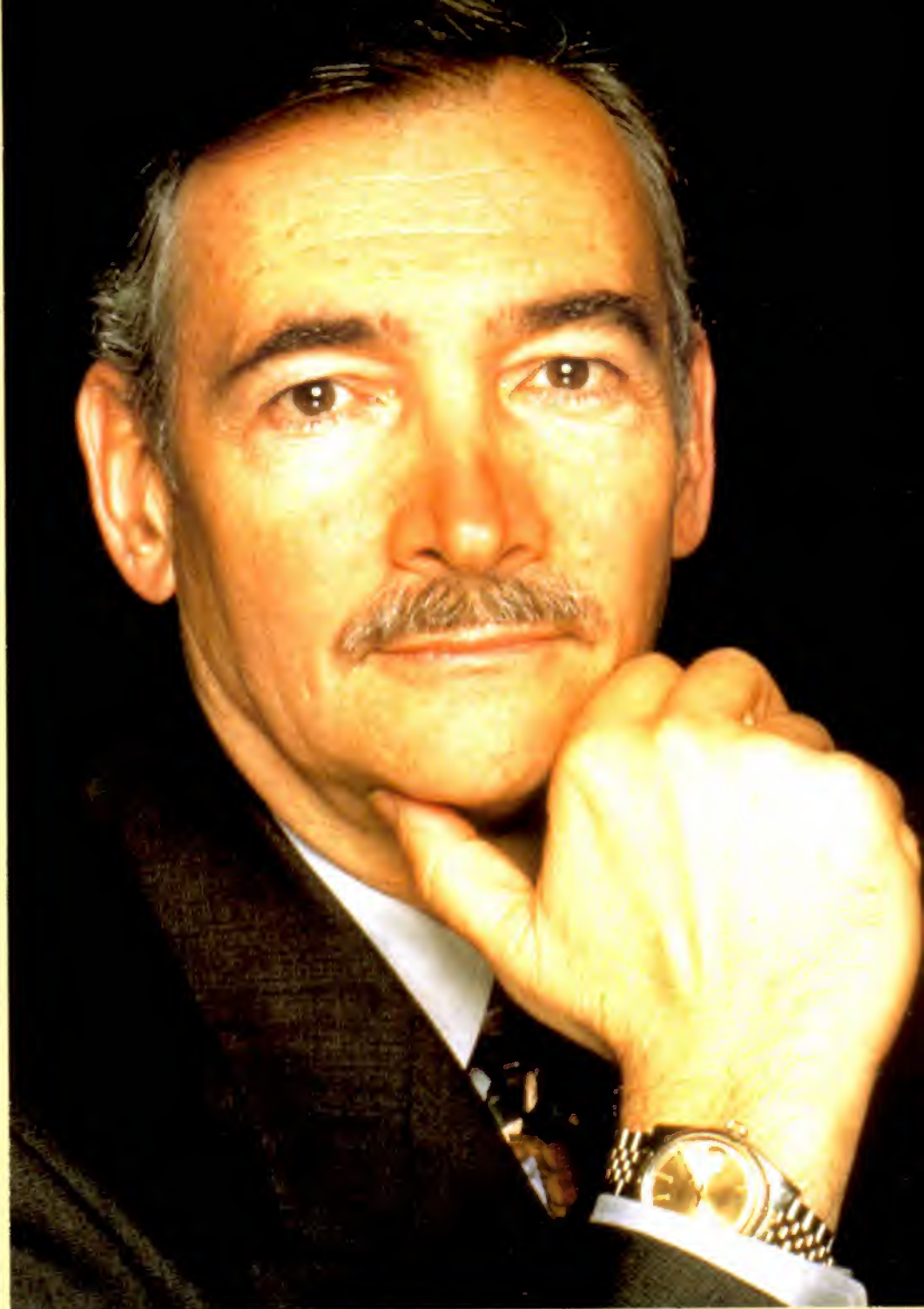
Sitting in his Eon Studios office at Frogmore Studios in England, on the set of *TOMORROW NEVER DIES*, Wilson laughed recounting his brief moments of on-screen glory. "In *MOONRAKER*, I'm in the

control room, and looking at the radar screen, I say, 'It looks like it's 150 meters in diameter.' In *FOR YOUR EYES ONLY* I was a Greek orthodox priest marrying a couple. And in *GOLDENEYE* I'm sitting at the Kremlin roundtable as one of the advisors."

His cameo had yet to be shot for the 18th 007 outing *TOMORROW NEVER DIES*, and Wilson said with a smile that "I have to fight for my part every time because the directors are always very reluctant, saying 'Oh God! We can't have a non-actor in the film.'"

Of course, when you're the film's producer and the driving force behind the Bond legacy, you can pretty much demand as many cameos as you want. Heck, he could even insist on playing Bond himself if he wanted to. "Well I promise I won't take it that far," he laughed.

The son of Lew Wilson—who played the first film *Batman* in 1923—Michael Wilson became part of the Broccoli



Producer Michael G. Wilson, the driving force behind the 007 franchise, the son-in-law of Bond movie series founder, the late Albert R. "Cubby" Broccoli.

family when his mother Dana married Cubby in 1960. A native New Yorker, Wilson graduated from College as an electrical engineer with a keen interest in scuba diving and photography. But after his *GOLDFINGER* sojourn, Wilson went on to study law at Stanford University, later becoming a partner in a prestigious Washington D.C. and New York law firm, spe-

cializing in international taxation.

Wilson ended up joining Eon Productions in a legal-administrative capacity in 1972. But after Broccoli's producing partner Harry Saltzman decided to call it quits after the ninth 007, *THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN* in 1974, Broccoli decided he needed someone to help share the producing chores and

Bond's Hitchcock: Wilson has had a cameo in every Bond film since *THE SPY WHO LOVED ME* (1977), including (l to r) the priest in *FOR YOUR EYES ONLY* (1981), the Kremlin advisor in *GOLDENEYE* (1995), and the control room technician in *MOONRAKER* (1979). See if you can spot him in the latest entry.



turned to Wilson for aide in the increasingly complex productions. Wilson became assistant to the producer on *THE SPY WHO LOVED ME*—it became the highest grossing 007 adventure at the time—and then earned his producing stripes as executive producer on *MOONRAKER*. He continued in that capacity on the next two Bonds *FOR YOUR EYES ONLY* and *OCTOPUSSY* and then served as co-producer with his stepfather on *A VIEW TO A KILL*, *THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS*, and *LICENCE TO KILL*. At the same time, Wilson was taking an active part in the creative direction of the series as co-screenwriter of the films starting with *FOR YOUR EYES ONLY*.

After a six-year absence of Bond, Wilson returned the world's most success: film franchise to the screen in 1995 with *GOLDENEYE*, which became the highest grossing Bond to date, pulling-in over \$350 million in global box office. Wilson produced the film along with his stepsister Barbara Broccoli. By that point, Cubby Broccoli at age 86 was in failing health, and although he got to view some rushes from *GOLDENEYE*, he didn't live to see the finished film or its overwhelming response. Broccoli certainly left an indelible mark in cinema history over his five-decade ca-

The one Bond girl who really matters: Wilson shares producing power with Barbara Broccoli, Cubby's daughter.



MICHAEL WILSON

“I feel the responsibility mostly when I go out or when I go to the location we’re shooting and the press and the public come up and their enthusiasm is just so overwhelming.”



Wilson on the set of 1989's *LICENCE TO KILL*, the second of two films starring Timothy Dalton as Bond, with director John Glen (l) and father-in-law and bond executive producer "Cubby" Broccoli, learning the ropes to run the franchise.

reer. In 1982 he received the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Science's coveted Irving G. Thalberg Award and in 1987 was honored with the Order of the British Empire and named *Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres* by the French Government. Wilson said his stepfather's friendship is deeply missed and his guidance on the Bond series irreplaceable.

“We had been working together since 1974, on a daily basis, and in our office we sat across from each other at our desks,” Wilson said softly. “He was my mentor and my dearest friend.”

“I miss being able to talk to him and tell him about problems,” he continued. “Over the years, he still always took a pretty active role. He came down to Mexico when we were shooting *LICENCE TO KILL*. But what was always nice is you could always call him up and chat and laugh about stuff. Like if we were having a problem with the production, he

would laugh and say, ‘Oh, we had that problem before on *THUNDERBALL* or something. It was that kind of attitude which was nice. I guess the difference is I have to do that now. Part of my function is just to make everyone else feel good and not worry about stuff and help solve their problems.’”

Wilson admitted he and Barbara Broccoli feel an obligation to carry on the Bond series, partly out of love for the films, partly because of their heritage, “but certain not because of financial necessity,” he added.

“I feel the responsibility mostly when I go out or when I go to the location we’re shooting and the press and the public come up and their enthusiasm is just so overwhelming,” said Wilson. “Everywhere you go, people want to know when the next film is coming out and what it’s about. I was at dinner last night and three of the waiters—who are always very formal and careful—couldn’t contain themselves and were asking

me all about Bond and this film. It’s a nice feeling.

“And you know, you realize that in different ways over 500 million people see the Bond films and have two hours where they can forget their cares and have goo escapist entertainment. So that ability to bring that kind of experience to those many people—how can you not do it? When you think about it, how can you *not* do Bond? So in that sense, I don’t look at the obligation as a burden but an opportunity to bring much joy and fun to people.”

But Wilson agreed that it’s also a duty to keep the series from falling into possible disarray at the hands of someone else. Because if Wilson & Broccoli ever stopped producing Bond, someone else inevitably would—and this is their family heritage.

“See that’s the thing,” said Wilson. “I don’t have much faith in anyone else assuming the reins. There may be people who could do it better, but the way it would probably go, there’s more opportunity for it to be done worse. And I think all you have to do is look at some of the great writers we bring in and listen to what they pitch us. With the ideas they pitch, believe me, it would be very easy for this thing to go off the rails.”

Wilson cited the recurring need of writers in story ideas to ridicule Bond and his image. “It’s almost perverse and I don’t know why,” said Wilson, shaking his head. “They love to make him the butt of jokes or make him appear foolish. And that’s not Bond. I mean it’s always good to put him at a disadvantage—it makes it more interesting—but there’s a difference between being at a disadvantage and being ridiculed.”

Wilson laughed and says that out of 10 writers—all A-list—that came in an did major pitches after *GOLDENEYE*, two of them had the exact same idea: “That Stephen Hawking was the villain, sitting in his wheelchair with his little computer—this is the guy Bond has to fight!” Wilson chuckled at the thought. “I said, ‘Well after Bond pushes his wheelchair down the stairs, what happens in the fight? And the other guy with the same idea

said, 'Stephen Hawking is the villain *and* he's blind, because Bond blinded him in a previous encounter! So he lives underground in a dark place with no light!' So I said, 'Well how do we photograph this if it takes place in the dark? I mean these ideas used to work well in radio, but for the movies...'

Wilson said that at pitch meetings, he can predict virtually every idea that writers present. Among the ones he usually gets are Goldfinger's daughter as the villain, as well as the melting of the polar ice caps. "It's always the same ideas, and after a while, you've basically heard them all. So you sit there and listen and realize that you have to really do it yourself from the ground up," said Wilson. "That's why I spent four months with Bruce [Feirstein] because you have to really invent it yourself. Most writers seem to be cliché-ridden. Maybe we've done so many that it's harder to come up with new ideas. But they need to realize that you start out with a strong villain and a caper and everything else follows.

"The problem is everyone remembers the things they liked best about the Bond films—so they bring back Jaws or bring in Goldfinger's daughter—and they figure, 'Well if it worked once, it'll work again.' But we try to stay from that because that's a trap. It's an easy way out."

The bottom line is "it should be fun to think up the ideas but difficult to achieve them, because otherwise," said Wilson, "everybody would be doing these films."

Of course when James Bond came onto the scene in the '60s, he was practically the only game in town. Action-adventure had never been so fantastic. But these days, with big-budget actioners opening almost every week, how does 007 keep the edge over the competition? "As far as I can tell, we are still the only real action adventure film, wit the sort of suave, European-style leading man," offered Wilson. "We try to paint on a big canvas—he's underwater, he's mountain climbing, he's in the jungle, he's in the snow, he's in the urban environment—it takes you to countless locales. It's a structure which keeps the pic-



Michelle Yeoh as Wai Linn and Pierce Brosnan as Bond in *TOMORROW NEVER DIES*, the 18th film in the most successful series in movie history, caught in the act of infiltrating media mogul Carver.

ture moving and interesting. That's always been our trademark component. And Bond's a different kind of guy too—action heroes are always blue collar guys with only one t-shirt in their closet. Bond is far more sophisticated with a real brutal side underneath."

In Bond's six year absence before *GOLDENEYE* there was constant speculation about a major re-tooling of the series. Rumors abounded of turning it into a comedy or bringing Schwarzenegger or Stallone into the role, or even turning Bond into a woman with Sharon Stone assuming the lead. But Wilson insisted those stories were all false; he would never mess with a proven formula.

"The thing about James Bond is he's an identifiable character on the order of Sherlock Holmes, Batman, Superman, and Tarzan. He's one of those fictitious characters who is now part of our modern mythology. And you can't make him into something else. He's an established character."

Wilson feels that Pierce Brosnan has brought more opportunities to explore the character of Bond. "Pierce brings a dimension of vulnerability, which I think is good," he said.

"It gives us some added areas for the script writing. He plays the humor well, which is good, and he plays the action stuff well. He can be really tough when he needs to be."

Wilson is concerned about revealing too much behind Bond's mystique. "We've had [questions] from certain actors, 'Where does Bond actually live? How is his place furnished?' But Bond is a civil servant—he can't really be in a lavish country house. Do you really want to see a place with the laundry piled up in the corner? He's more a guy who lives in grand hotels on his expense account playing some kind of undercover role. It may be interesting for the actor to explore the other side of Bond's life, but the question is, 'is it interesting for the public?' You have to keep that in mind. Bond is much more interesting not shown at home with empty soup cans on the counter."

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Cold War defrosted, it is difficult to come up with formidable opponents and missions worthy of Bond's talents and legacy as the preeminent secret agent. "We wrestle with [that] all the time," said Wilson. "Every time we sit

down, we start out by saying, 'We're going to make a picture like *FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE*—mystery, intrigue, the plot and structure fairly specific and confined—and we always end up with *THUNDERBALL* by the end of the process. It just always seems that whenever you write something, someone always says, 'Oh that's not big enough for Bond.' So it always comes down to the lives of hundreds of thousands—if not millions—of people have to be at risk. That always seems to be the necessary ingredient for these things and it makes it difficult to write. So in a way, the stories have a sense of sameness because of those types of elements, but it seems to be the inevitable situation."

Though Wilson is still concerned with the production of *TOMORROW NEVER DIES* he says he hasn't even begun to think about the next Bond, which MGM/UA is pushing for a Thanksgiving 1999 release. "This morning Barbara [Broccoli] came in here and said, 'You know we've only got 22 weeks left to deliver this film!' I said, 'Yeah, but the scary thing is we've only got 60 weeks before we have to begin pre-production on the next one!' □

007

JONATHAN PRYCE ON BOND VILLAINY

The award-winning stage and screen actor enjoys being part of the Bond Family.

By Alan Jones

Add the name Jonathan Pryce to the distinguished gallery of Bond villains who have tried to rid the world of the greatest British spy "On Her Majesty's Secret Service." In *TOMORROW NEVER DIES* Pryce plays mysterious media mogul Elliot Carver who runs his international operations from a state-of-the-art stealth ship cruising around the global Super Powers. With twin hulls, huge pontoons, a shiny hi-tech control room, strange smooth planes and an unusual machine



Pryce as Elliot Carver, the media mogul who publishes the world-wide newspaper "Tomorrow" and is bent on setting off World War III (left).

007 moves into action.

"I've never had any burning desire to play a Bond villain," said Pryce. "I always thought it would be a fun thing to do but it wasn't going to break my heart if I didn't

get the chance. When the script for *TOMORROW NEVER DIES* arrived on my doorstep I found Elliot Carver very attractive as a role aside from him being in a Bond film. I found it a very intelligent approach based in a great deal of knowledge, first by scriptwriter Bruce Feirstein, and secondly in truth about media moguls like Rupert Murdoch and Ted Turner.

"The thrust of the script wasn't necessarily about what they do but what their possible po-

tential for doing was—controlling the media and controlling information along with it. Such moguls hopefully don't want as much power as Carver does, even though they seem to have it anyway. That's why I liked the character so much, he was real in the way many Bond villains aren't."

Jonathan Pryce is one of Britain's most versatile and compelling stage and screen stars with a host of awards to prove it. His movie appearances include his first Hollywood picture *SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES*, *HAUNTED HONEYMOON*, *THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHHAUSEN*, *BRAZIL* and *CARRINGTON* for which he won the 1995 Best Actor

prize at the Cannes Film Festival. Pryce most recently starred as Peron opposite Madonna in *EVITA*.

Noted Pryce, "Actually, Carver is an older version of Mr. Dark, the character I played in *SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES*."

The offer to play Carver mainly came from producer Barbara Broccoli, according to Pryce. "She's been a fan of my work going back years. But I've never been available before and everything is a corporate decision with these movies. There's a world of roles to choose from but I also knew director Roger Spottiswoode was keen to have me do something too. My children absolutely adored *GOLDENEYE* and their response to that probably had a lot to do with my accepting the role."

The scene Pryce is shooting at Pinewood's 007 sound stage takes place in the vast metallic hull of his stealth ship at the climax of the picture. Carver is trying to outwit 007, with Bond Girl Wai Lin in his evil clutches, as the spy plays for time so he can rig an epic explosion leading to the villain's nasty death by Sea-Vac. "I thought I'd killed Bond already, of course," smiled Pryce. "So now I'm trying again and saying the line 'Reports of your death are a little premature, Mr. Bond.' It's amazing how many times you get to say 'So, Mr. Bond.' You get hooked in a way and need to say it all the time. I keep wanting to add it to the beginning of every sentence!"

And that's all part of the fun of playing a character like Car-



called the Sea-Vac housed in the hold, the totally black ship appears like a shadow in the world's trouble spots and vanishes in a whisper of wake... Unlike his flagship newspaper *Tomorrow* with a global daily circulation of 100 million, and satellite systems able to access every television set on earth. But Carver needs constantly breaking news to feed his huge empire and it's when he decides to create it himself by trying to engineer World War Three that

er. "All the Bond villains are caricatures of a certain type," said Pryce. "I'm not avoiding that here because there are some things you don't want to avoid when you take on such a vivid part. The Bond movies are action adventures with a certain amount of camp humor involved. Everyone is aware of that. But they also have a certain kind of unshakeable logic to them. They create their own rules a great deal of the time. You know the villain is going to die, for example, so there's no point in stopping to think why the villain hasn't killed Bond yet. There's an expectancy on the audience's part to see that humor played out with a certain familiarity."

A character like Carver also creates his own rules in Pryce's mind. "Let's face it, if you are in such a powerful position, there is no one who's going to tell you what to do. He would have his own rules and logic primarily because he can. It depends what day it is whether I'm putting across his megalomaniac side or not as I do have this other side to me—the honest communicator who's reporting the news for the good of mankind and not just for his own profit. His communications manifesto is not only to feed information honestly to people but also to as many people as possible. And that's where he goes over the edge because he wants the broadcasting rights to China.

"Carver presents many faces and that's interesting for an actor to do," continued Pryce. "He has a public benevolent face and a private ruthless one. He takes a great deal of sadistic pleasure in how he deals with his enemies, but the physical sadism is taken over by his sidekick Stamper [six-foot seven-inch German actor Gotz Otto in whose character the pain and pleasure senses have been genetically reversed]. Carver gets no real pleasure from watching people suffer; it's just all very necessary in business terms."

One of the people Carver dispatches with alacrity is his own wife, Paris (played by LOIS & CLARK's Teri Hatcher), when he discovers she was romantically attached to Bond in her early career. Pryce laughed, "She be-

PRYCE ON MEDIA MOGUL ROLE

"It's about what a media mogul's potential is: controlling the media and information along with it. That's why I liked him. He was real in the way many Bond villains aren't."



Carver doesn't approve when he learns that Bond (l) had a dalliance with his wife Paris (Teri Hatcher) early in his career—so he kills her.

trayed me and I kill her. I don't stand for anything. I loved working with Teri. I was such a fan of LOIS & CLARK because I used to watch it in between the Saturday matinee and evening performances of *Oliver!* I would stay in my dressing room because getting out of Fagin make-up was too boring to contemplate. So I'd order pizza, and watch her in THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN."

Pryce admires Pierce Brosnan a great deal too. "On the Bond scale I'd say I like him the most," said Pryce. "He's eminently well-equipped to play Bond in the looks department. He sounds great and can do all the action asked of him. Off camera he handles himself extremely well also. I admire that aspect more. You could become a total....I don't know what....about playing Bond without a sense of humor or irony about your position. He's very giving as an actor. He was there off-camera for all my lines yesterday. Actually, my reverses today were better than my film performance yesterday. That's often the case. I was more relaxed today so it's a case of 'Damn, why didn't I do it like that yesterday.' But with Pierce

you get the impression that he's not so pressured about it all."

What Pryce has looked to director Roger Spottiswoode for more than anything else is his sense of taste. He explained, "It's tuning the character to what's going on around him. Is it too much? Too little? I've been so worried about going over the top...but then the screen is so huge....I rely on Roger to tell me if I'm being too intense or not. Today on set I have to kill Gupta [sleight-of-hand artist Ricky Jay playing Carver's techno-terrorist right hand man] so I'll be keeping my reactions well in check."

Actually, the day before this scene was shot, the script had the Gupta character surviving Carver's assassination attempt. Noted Pryce, "That's an example of one of the many rewrites we've had on the film.

"What had happened between the script I originally saw to the one we were getting close to shooting on April 1, 1997, was that Carver had undergone a number of changes I didn't think were for the better. But everyone realized that, not just me. Roger Spottiswoode and the producers realized it had gone off course also. It

happened because they were trying to deal with so many other elements in the film that it had a domino effect on my character. Scriptwriter Bruce Feirstein came back on board, and rather than rewriting anything, he put back everything to do with Carver because my character was his invention. He was the one with all the pertinent knowledge about that kind of man having worked in journalism for so many years. It wasn't the antagonistic battle that was being described in the press."

Despite those initial teething problems, Pryce has had a great deal of fun making TOMORROW NEVER DIES. "It's been a long shoot but my scenes have all been well spread out," he said. "There were blocks of up to three weeks where I wasn't wanted and that's very relaxing. It's a pleasant way of working because I'd keep coming back to the role refreshed and ready to have fun with it again. Doing it every day might have become a little wearing. You've caught me during my most intense schedule, shooting the ending. It's only in the last few days that I've started making jokes on set. There's often a danger in doing that. You get into the wrong attitude which takes the edge away. If you think too much about what you're doing and start sending it up, then you will lose credibility. I've deliberately kept a harder edge to Carver up until now, but in the denouement you can't avoid having a bit of a laugh. It wouldn't be a good idea to resist it either.

"What I can't believe is we'll all be seeing the completed TOMORROW NEVER DIES in about two months time. The joke on the picture has been we'll have the wrap party on the same day as the cast and crew screening!"

Summed up Pryce, "I've thoroughly enjoyed being a part of what they call the Bond Family. If you are the villain, you only get one crack at it. Perhaps I should be the first villain to return from cyberspace. With all his communications technology, I'm sure Carver could program his computer revival." □

007

THE REAL JAMES BOND IAN FLEMING'S VISION

*The Bond of the books is enigmatic and lonely,
a far cry from the playboy of the movies.*

By Stephen Spotswood

Ian Fleming's enigmatic, emotionally complex James Bond is popular worldwide, but in name only. Bond could be in turns moody, apathetic, and lonely. He was a tortured man both mentally and physically. James Bond was not the English Lone Ranger the movies have made him out to be. What the typical movie audience recognizes as 007 are the various screen incarnations, whether he's portrayed by Sean Connery, George Lazenby, Roger Moore, Timothy Dalton, or Pierce Brosnan. But the more depressing aspects of Fleming's novels have been lost.

Ian Fleming's James Bond is described very differently in the novels than in the movies. Fleming seemed to want to keep Bond's image elusive, so to get the complete picture one would have to read all 13 of the original novels. Bond is an emotionally distant man, neither happy nor unhappy. His unpleasant memories are compartmentalized and occasionally examined only to be filed away again. He was not one for sitting around and brooding, but he didn't seem to feel anything but creature desires for food, sex, and the avoidance of danger.

Physically, Bond was described as being not hard on the eyes, but no male model either. In *Casino Royale*, Vesper Lynd said Bond looked like Hoagy Carmichael. The narrative informs us that Bond had grey-blue eyes, and black unruly hair which he refused to gel. Bond's trademark gesture was pushing a forelock back over his head, and if he didn't, sometimes his girlfriends would while talking to him. This description is unlike the film versions where his hair seems immovably fixed. Fleming leaves the impression that Bond is somewhat lanky and sharp featured, no Lord Greystoke type like George Lazenby in *ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE*.

Bond could get lost in a crowd, and was described in the books as looking like any bored civil servant on his way to work. Bond was like a blur in the background, or a



Fleming identified Bond in the books as looking like musician and film star Hoagy Carmichael, album cover art by Steve Karchin.

shadow seen against the wall for a moment. 007 strikes from the shadows, and then returns to the shadows. The only way his opponents can identify him is by a knife scar that runs from the edge of his right eye to the edge of his thin lipped mouth.

Fleming gave the impression, without stating so directly, that James Bond came from a rather privileged background. Bond seemed to know good servants when he saw one, as mentioned in *Moonraker*. We learn in *Goldfinger* that Bond started playing golf in a respectable club when he was 17, which in the original book's time-line would have been during the Depression. However, in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, we learn that he never had an inheritance. Apparently, Bond's parents were as free with their money as he was. Bond was also described in the novels as being only 37 years old, eight years away from his forced retirement at age 45 from the field to a desk job. He was well tanned, something

M abhorred in *Moonraker*. The adult Bond was similar to the stereotyped image of a young British officer in colonial India, condescending, sarcastic, and a little too filled with his own self-worth.

The James Bond of the novels favored antiques, not newer, trendier items. He drove a 1933 Bentley with a powerful racing motor, that was tended to by a retired military officer. After Bond's beloved Bentley was wrecked in *Moonraker*, he did drive newer models, but they were not filled with Batmobile optional extras as in the movies. Bond hated the newest American cars in *Diamonds Are Forever*, because they were automatics, with air-conditioning, and radios. He preferred the feeling that he was driving the car, not the car driving him, and he had a general abhorrence for air-conditioning of any sort.

The other antiques Bond preferred were at home. He lived in a flat on Chelsea street that was once a mansion, but was converted into four apartments. Bond had an elderly Scottish maid named May, who was very attentive to her employer, but was never in the movies. Even with the way he dressed Bond tended to be conservative. He always wore expensive dark blue suits and matching silk ties. His cigarette case was always filled with Turkish cigarettes made for him by Morelands of Grosvenor street.

The dark image of James Bond that Sean Connery presented in *DR. NO*, the heavy drinking, tuxedo-clad, woman killer—both as seducer and as assassin if necessary, was actually the very kind of agent that Bond most feared, as stated in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*. This was an agent who could kill casually, and may have been Bond in his early career before the novels started. When *Casino Royale* introduced the character of James Bond he was presented as an agent who was burning out, and no longer knew what he was fighting for. He saw himself as a government's agent hired to kill other governments' agents, without any reason other than orders. He sought for a purpose or cause for what he had to do.



Ian Fleming visits with Sean Connery on the set of *DR. NO* in 1961. The Bond author would be surprised at how far his brainchild has strayed from his concept.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

“The dark image of Bond that Sean Connery presented, the heavy-drinking, tuxedo-clad, woman killer, both seducer & assassin, was the kind of agent that Bond most feared.”

He found a purpose in the end of the first novel in avenging his lover, Vesper Lynd, against SMERSH, the Soviet agency that forced her suicide.

Another purpose Bond found was to become a one-man reclamation project who specialized in helping women with painful pasts. This element could be seen as sexist, that all these women needed was a man to make love to them well. However, in Fleming's novels Bond was less of a sexual predator than in the movies, especially the ones starring Roger Moore. With some exceptions Bond was almost monogamous. In every novel he seems to fall for that one woman that could make his life whole.

Ian Fleming divulged little of James Bond's biography in any one novel, but it was apparently tragic. In the novel, *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* the reader learns that Bond is half Scottish and half Swiss, and grew up in Scotland, and from *You Only Live Twice*, that he's also an orphan. His parents died in an accident when he was about 12 years old. The loss of his parents was mentioned in passing in *GoldenEye*. James Bond was raised by an aunt. Since his aunt was never presented in the novels it's safe to assume that she is dead. In *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, Bond mentioned that he had no living relatives, therefore a nephew like cartoon James

Bond Jr. was unlikely. Bond seemed to seek familial relationships. His boss Sir Miles Messervy (M) seemed to serve as a stern father figure. In fact, one of the few times Bond was described as loving someone was in *Casino Royale*, when the novel described how he loved and respected M. So arbitrarily hiring an actress to play Bond's new boss in the film *GoldenEye* was odd. If M had resigned, Bond would most likely visit him, especially since both are also naval men, with other shared interests. If M had died, a funeral scene with Bond in attendance would seem to be necessary.

Bond had other interesting relationships within his office. The flirtation with M's secretary Miss Money Penny has been retained in the movies, but another has been dropped. The novel *Moonraker* showed that Bond had a relationship with his own secretary, Loelia Ponsonby, that was more complicated. Like a brother he teases her about her name, because he knows she hates that. She at times seems like a surrogate mother or wife. She worries about all her 00's (007, 008, and 0011), and can't stand to look at them when they all come back from missions with all sorts of serious injuries. At times she appears to be the boss of the office, assigning reading materials that the 00's have to commit to memory.

The key tragedy in Bond's life is that everyone he really gets close to dies, so he tries not to get close to anyone, and he is also a killer who can no longer stand his work. He is an orphan who had a close lover he was considering marriage to commit suicide. But he feels that he cannot show his emotions. At the end of *Casino Royale* a tearful James Bond is reading Vesper's suicide note, but since she was also his partner in the mission, he has to call the office and tell them that "...the bitch is dead."

James Bond does not always get the girl, so at the end of *Moonraker*, he's on medical leave, hobbling on crutches to meet Gala Brand and invite her to France, hoping then they will finally sleep together. He's told by a surprised Gala that she's engaged and she points out her fiance who was standing a short distance away. Bond feels disappointment by her refusal, and anger at his presumption. Bond decides it's time for him to take his cold heart elsewhere, and he walks off feigning nonchalance, because he knows that is what is expected of him. Bond did eventually get married to Comtesse Teresa di Vicenzo, daughter of the European mobster Draco, in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, but at the end of the novel they are driving off to their honeymoon only to be gunned down by Ernst Stavro Blofeld of SPECTRE. The novel ends with a badly injured Bond cradling the corpse of his wife.

In contrast to 007's indestructible nature in the films, almost every Fleming novel seemed to have Bond either badly injured, or dying. Bond's distaste for his work was not only because he was so often tortured, but also because he had to kill. He would often refuse to kill on first contact, but would investigate his target

so he could justify the killing.

When Bond killed the act was often brutal. Although he did use such items as naval limpet mines, most of his killings were not so neat, and he had to watch his victims die. Bond frequently relied on a good knife. We learn in *From Russia With Love* that he got the secret service's attention during World War II, when he was assigned to knock out a Japanese listening post. Bond had to kill the operator by stabbing him several times. This act is what got him promoted to the 00's, and as 007, he was the head of this small team of agents licensed to kill. In the conclusion of *From Russia With Love*, Bond had to use the knife again when he severed a major artery in Grant's leg, and then be pinned underneath him as Grant bled to death.

In *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* while escaping on a pair of stolen skis from Blofeld's stronghold, James Bond saw that the SPECTRE men had set

continued on page 61

The Bond of the books (1955), before the films took primacy, a man vulnerable and not nearly as smooth.



007

BOND IN THE '90S EVERGREENING THE FRANCHISE

With the fall of communism and the rise of AIDS, the new Bond bounces back from a mid-life crisis.

By Tom Doherty

In Mike Myers' goofball satire *AUSTIN POWERS: INTERNATIONAL MAN OF MYSTERY*, a swinging secret agent man from the incense and peppermints 1960s, frozen in suspended animation, awakes into the politically correct 1990s, a world where everything from the gender dynamics to the geopolitics has changed. As Austin stumbles his way through a post-commie, co-ed culture, the once-dashing espionage agent is as out of date as his Nehru jacket and pick-up lines.

Yet every few years the very epitome of the sex-and-spy guy of the mid-'60s emerges from cold storage to reanimate a film franchise that by rights should be as dead as his bargain basement imitators, Matt Helm and Derek Flint. Like some tuxedo-clad, martini-sipping, sports car-racing Nosferatu, Bond... James Bond strides on screen, places himself in the crosshairs of the iris, and assumes the iconic firing stance. Last time around, in *GOLDENEYE* (1995), the signs of life were strong enough to make the old boy seem like his old self.

In terms of sheer longevity and international profile, the James Bond series reigns as the most successful motion picture franchise in screen history. From his debut in *DR. NO* (1962) up to the current entry *TOMORROW NEVER DIES*, Bond has changed face and tried to keep pace with the times: Sean Connery, still the irreplaceable prototype for the



The series' '90s reformation has included uprighting the female position from the horizontal: Michelle Yeoh in *TOMORROW NEVER DIES* is now Bond's equal.

purists, in *DR. NO*, *FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE* (1963), *GOLDFINGER* (1964), *THUNDERBALL* (1965), *YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE* (1967), *DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER* (1971), and the aptly titled comeback *NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN* (1983); the one-shot wonder and trivial pursuit answer George Lazenby in *ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE* (1969); the durable understudy and ultimately long in the tooth Roger Moore in *LIVE AND LET DIE* (1973), *THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN* (1974), *THE SPY WHO LOVED ME* (1977), *MOONRAKER* (1979), *FOR YOUR EYES ONLY* (1981), *OCTOPUSSY* (1983), and *A VIEW TO A KILL* (1985); the solid and underrated Timothy Dalton, better than his material, in *THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS* (1987) and *LICENSE TO KILL*

(1989); and the present savior of the franchise, Pierce Brosnan, in *GOLDENEYE*, *TOMORROW NEVER DIES*, and, if the heirs of Cubby Broccoli are smart, a half-dozen more. After eighteen films, the Bond formula may seem an exercise in connecting the dots, but anyone who thinks the films write themselves has only to consult the downward spiral of the *Batman* series, another screen franchise with an interchangeable lead protagonist, to see how a license to print money can be revoked by clutter and sloth.

It is worth remembering that Ian Fleming's novels first became widely popular in the early 1960s because President John Kennedy read them for relaxation. Like JFK, Bond was urbane, stylish, witty, sexually voracious, and a fierce Cold Warrior. But though Bond possessed the requisite prowess and

patriotism, he represented a marked shift from the WWII hero in his unashamed embrace of the pleasure principle (drinking, gambling, fast cars) and his willingness to leap into the sack with any luscious babe brandishing a Lugar and a very un-Christian name. A union of appealing opposites, Bond could inflict death-dealing violence and satisfy the most demanding sexual appetite, hand to hand and at the same time if necessary. He blended American individualism with European sophistication, the sturdiness of John Wayne with the grace of Cary Grant, the independence of the lone wolf with the commitment of the organization man whose identity was subsumed by a three-digit serial number.

Inevitably, over the years, as the franchise spread out from the classic Connerys to the lesser Moores, the pithy dialogue and daring stunts became ever more labored and stilted. Whether it was Bond's brand of drink or automobile, audiences came to know the tropes by heart and the filmmakers went on automatic pilot: the lethal and leggy models, the come-hither banter with the randy Miss Money Penny, the ritual consultation with FX-expert "Q" ("Try to pay attention, double-oh-seven"), the international scenery and set decor by the rich and the tasteless, and the really evil mastermind bent on world domination, or whatever.

Even as the generic arteries got clogged, the Bond franchise came up against two enemies deadlier than any mad industri-

alist with nuclear missiles and a shark tank: the end of the Cold War and the danger in Hot Sex, the fall of communism and the rise of AIDS. What justified Bond's license to kill, not to mention the enormous public expenditures for laser-equipped Aston Martins and cuff-link-sized explosive devices, was the palpable threat from the Soviet Bloc. Bond managed to sidestep the decrepit condition of the British Empire by subcontracting his services to NATO and the CIA, but the disintegration of the USSR was a near terminal diagnosis. Like every other action adventure genre since the late '80s, the Bond films suffer from a severe villain shortage. However, the problem is more acute for Bond than for Schwarzenegger-Gibson-Stallone et al. because his whole identity is bound up in political espionage and national security, not law enforcement and domestic tranquility. After saving the world from totalitarian menaces of global reach, the likes of drug dealers, Mideast terrorists, and rogue corporate bureaucrats are pathetic underachievers unworthy of so class an act as Bond.

Then there was the female trouble. In its time, the original Bond series was daringly explicit in the exposure of gilded female forms swimming in silhouette through Maurice Binder title sequences to the accompaniment of bombastic pop anthems. Yet females weren't just baubles to decorate the franchise; they were putty in Bond's hands. Even the femme fatales fell victim to his fatal charm, as the toughest tigress rolled over and purred. But if Bond was defined by his sophisticated ways with the ladies, retrograde attitudes to woman, once so *au current*, were no longer *a la mode*. The role of women in the Bond films (horizontal) required uprighting if Bond's masculine magnetism was to remain adult and attractive and not adolescent and obnoxious. Ironically, as a male fantasy figure stuck in a PG-13 mode, the internal constraints on explicit content, sexual and violent, actually assisted the reformation of Bond's macho consciousness. In a world of BASIC INSTINCT and SEVEN, the Bond

JAMES BOND IN THE SIXTIES

“Bond blended American individualism with European sophistication, the sturdiness of John Wayne with the grace of Cary Grant, he was the lone wolf and the organization man.”



Female trouble: Pierce Brosnan as Bond, with Teri Hatcher, a male fantasy figure stuck in the PG mode who now seems chaste, almost chivalric.

movies seem delicate and chaste, almost chivalric.

Bearing the burden of all of the above, GOLDENEYE (1995) looks to be a pivotal transition film. It not only took on the ash heap of communism and the twists in the gender wars, but, most crucially, slipped a terrific new actor into Bond's skin. Besides being more sharply directed, deftly acted, and coherently plotted than any of the recent Bonds, GOLDENEYE knew that the terms of the genre needed to be

shaken up to be stirring. The new Bond order is signaled straight off with Daniel Kleinman's terrific title sequence, where statuesque models sledgehammer down statues of Lenin and Stalin. The self-conscious deconstruction continues in the offices of Bond's superior, who has undergone a more than cosmetic change.

"I think you're a sexist, misogynist dinosaur, a relic of the Cold War whose boyish charms are wasted on me," says the transgendered M (Judi

Dench). GOLDENEYE played it both ways: it was a Cold War film about post-Cold War Russia; it was a post-feminist film with women warriors that also allowed Bond bedtime and backtalk with beautiful women. The Russian ambience captured the spirit of the vintage espionage thriller while the new elements (computer programs, killer satellites, location shooting in Red Square) kept it from looking like a throwback. Similarly, though Bond is no longer racking up notches on his belt, the girls still swoon. Thankfully, too, he is permitted his incorrigible salaciousness. Thus, Miss Money Penny broaches the subject of sexual harassment only to then tell him he may have to make good on his innuendoes.

In the Irishman Pierce Brosnan, Bond seems to have found his ideal incarnation for the next decade or so. A wry and likeable fellow (especially for someone so damned handsome), Brosnan seemed destined for the role since the first episode of REMINGTON STEELE in 1982. Where Timothy Dalton was a bit too serious (he would have made a more effective Bond in the 1960s, before the genre entered its baroque phase), Brosnan plays Bond as a dancer light on his feet. Not least, Brosnan has the capacity not to look ludicrous in formal wear and to deliver lines that when new, make you cringe, and, when old, make you lip sync.

Bond aside, the can-you-top-this stunt work remains a main attraction for any transnational series that aims to play well from Bangor to Bangkok. In the breathtaking pre-credit sequence that opens GOLDENEYE, Bond flies through space after a pilotless airplane diving down a canyon. The pyrotechnics of the stunt aren't as impressive as the audacity of the frame-breaking gesture. All pretense at verisimilitude and adherence to the laws of gravity is forsaken as the franchise flies without a net. The franchise will probably not resort to shape shifting aliens or Jurassic reptiles as threats that require the services of her majesty's secret service, but audiences can ex-

continued on page 60

BABYLON 5

Straczynski's prototype for future TV creations.

By Frank Garcia

"Changes tend to get made always small like a pebble dropped and ripple out into the water and sometimes you're not aware of the impact until the waves hit the shore.

"When STAR TREK first aired, no one paid much attention. And the critics dismissed it. It was cancelled after three years and dropped into syndication. And we all saw where that pebble went. In terms of the kinds of stories that are conventionally told in television, BABYLON 5 is pioneering some new forms in the structures which, as the show stays around for the next 10-20 years, I think we'll have a substantially

J. Michael Straczynski, creator, executive producer and marathon script-writer, the driving force behind B5.

more important effect on how shows do their stories. And give them some tools they may not have had before."

—Joseph Michael Straczynski, creator and executive producer of BABYLON 5

BABYLON 5, this science fiction serialized drama which began in 1993, is quietly, in its own way, changing the face of television. The mass media and professional critics may not have recognized it yet, but the show is a new-found prototype model for the way future television can be created.

BABYLON 5 was a non-network show that managed to stay alive without falling through the cracks as a syndicated show. Originally carried by the PTEN consortium, which also presented TIME TRAX and KUNG FU—THE LEGEND CONTINUES, as a package to independent stations, BABYLON 5 hung on even as the organization dissolved. Warner Bros. Television made sure the saga continued uninterrupted by directly distributing the show to stations. When it looked like the show was going to be prematurely cancelled at the end of the fourth season, Turner Network, who had captured the national rerun rights, saved the space station by directly financing the show's fifth season, which begins airing with a two-hour movie in January.

"We have always been the underdog," said Straczynski. "We're up against the juggernaut of science fiction which is STAR TREK. In that sense it's almost a religious war between the two."

What follows is a discussion with Straczynski on the eight key ways the success of BABYLON 5 has changed the way science fiction will be presented on television in the future.



The Babylon 5 station, ground-breaking CGI effects by Ron Thornton's Foundation Imaging.

1 Create The Concept of a "Five-Year Novel For Television"

In the annals of television history, no one has ever sat down and pre-planned a television series using one grand, multi-threaded storyline spanning five years. Each season of the show represents a year in the lives of the characters. And we follow their adventures in blocks of 22 episodes per season. With a galactic canvas to paint his saga, Straczynski promised viewers that characters would live and die. Worlds would be discovered and destroyed. Stability is a myth. Courage, love, betrayal, and redemption are on the table. The struggle between chaos and order would be explored. When the series finally ends, the universe will discover the truth behind "the third age of mankind."

The first year was loaded with cryptic one-liners of dialogue that became very important in later segments. Foreshadowing loomed over many episodes. The second year was a jarring, abrupt time for both the creators and the audience. Series star Michael O'Hare as Commander Jeffrey Sinclair left the show and actor Bruce Boxleitner strode into the station hallways as Captain John Sheridan. But it was not until the third year that Straczynski seriously began to adjust the series' structure to be consistently serialized. Unpredictability became the norm. Starting with the eighth episode of the season, "Messages from Earth," a serialized structure of storytelling from episode-to-episode, continued unbroken—save for one show—throughout the fourth season.

As with soap operas, if you were a faithful viewer the more you watched, the greater you were rewarded with character and plot information. As a result, for many viewers, the entertainment value of the





The fifth and final year of the series premieres on TNT in January while the network strips airings of the show's first four seasons and adds two more B5 movies to the mix.

show increased, as you became privy to the intricacies of the opera and the history.

The downside of this construction, however, is that new viewers could feel locked out and puzzled at all the "inside" information needed to fully comprehend the events taking place. It's for this very reason we seldom see a series of this type. Networks and television stations fear the serialized format, concerned that audiences will be confused because they didn't see last week or last month's episode. In addition, there's the practice of airing episodes out of sequence which reinforces a desire for "stand-alone" stories.

Straczynski's invention of a novel for television is groundbreaking for television because he has broken the rules that dominate typical dramatic television, which is to create static, unbending series premises with characters and plotting which are not allowed to grow and evolve beyond defined parameters.

Having a serialized series format is not new. Daytime and prime-time soap opera drama series employ it. What's unusual is that it's all planned out with a specific destination in mind. It's not haphazard, make-it-up-as-you-go-along screenwriting.

Straczynski is working with what he calls a "living outline." He adjusts to accommodate production requirements plus actor and character tangents and curves while still aiming at a specific destination. He reports that so far the series is achieving at 85 to 110 percent of what was visualized in his head when he wrote the saga. A high statistic for any author.

Straczynski imbedded "a time bomb" into the story so that it cannot go beyond five years.

Will there be more television series in the future that follow B5's new-found model? Straczynski looks to a proposed B5 sequel series, *THE BABYLON PROJECT: CRUSADE* as a potential legacy. "B5 was an extremely rigorous arc, planned out to a very fine point," said Straczynski. "It'll go to a particular point that we'll arrive at. I've proved what I've wanted to prove with this story. Now, [with *CRUSADE*] rather than do exactly the same thing twice, let's do something a little different where you have an arc that carries you somewhere but there's more time to stop off and do different things. More flexibility in the storyline and see how that works.

"I grew up on the sagas; the *Lensmen* books, the *Foundation* books, Arthur C.

The two captains: Bruce Boxleitner as Sheridan and Michael O'Hare as Sinclair, united in the time travel two-parter "War Without End."



“We have always been the underdog. We’re up against the juggernaut of science fiction, STAR TREK. It’s a religious war between the two.”

—J. Michael Straczynski—

Clarke's *Childhood's End* and all the other ones. I'd like to see television do more."

But the brain power and the stamina required for someone to create their own television epic is a tall order indeed. "What it really takes is someone out there who's got a long track record in television to get it done," said Straczynski. "And also, foolish and crazy enough to do this and not have a life. To do that kind of show, that's all there is in life at that moment. Basically, the entire five years from the pilot to now, with this show my life has been consumed by *BABYLON 5*. I've seen one movie this year! I don't go out to parties or vacations. "You must be involved in every single frame of production to see this kind of thing pulled off properly.

"The only way you [can achieve this] is to do this without sleep for five years of your life. I'm not sure how many are willing to do that. There are a few people out there who are crazy enough to pick up the ball and run with it.

"As of this time, I haven't heard of anyone trying to do something similar."

2

Install Genuine Jeopardy. Unpredictability. Suspense.

In a limited series such as *BABYLON 5*, story is paramount and characters serve to tell an ever-changing, evolving storyline.

Straczynski is not bound by ordinary episodic conventions that require him to keep characters or plot in static state. Indeed, this is a story that cannot stand still. Like a paperback novel, the author is moving his plot and character pieces forward to the next chapter and towards an inescapable conclusion.

A lot of dramatic television today relies on "false" incidental jeopardy in an attempt to convince viewers that something pivotal or significant is going to happen during the next hour. But there is actually no genuine effort to implement change. Since actors are contractually bound to be there, nothing major can ever happen to their character. Usually something "major" happens when someone wants to leave the show.

Usually, actions and their consequences are not permanent. No one wants to wreck what is believed to be a



Mira Furlan as Delenn the Minbari ambassador, with Vorlon diplomat Kosh in "The Fall of Night," among twelve characters in a large ensemble that Straczynski juggles with aplomb.

successful series setup. For most of dramatic TV, extremely little "genuine" jeopardy is ever seen. Except on *BABYLON 5*.

Over the course of four years, at least nine recurring or incidental characters that have passed through the space station have either been moved "off the chessboard" or killed outright.

As a result, the audience and even the actors have no idea who's going to live or die or what events will transpire that might transform their characters physically—Delenn mutated into a half-human and Sinclair in the other direction—or spiritually (virtually every cast member has had spiritual, personal changes). This adds a palpable tension to the proceedings that is exciting and refreshing.

In the first season, Straczynski gleefully played with his audience with a hint, a prophecy, or a line of dialogue that would become very important later. As the seasons unfolded, the cards slowly opened, exposing surprising revelations and directions driven by characters and plot.

Except for an inner circle of individuals known only to Straczynski, no one is aware of the "big picture" of the series, or final fate of the characters. This secrecy adds to the suspense for viewers.

To illustrate how tenuous the stability of the cast is in relation to the evolving storyline, during the filming of the third season episode, "Grey 17 is Missing," actor Bill Mummy played a practical joke on co-star Jason Carter. From all reports, Mummy suggested for over an hour that he read in a script that Marcus—Carter's character on the show—was being killed off. Carter was disbelieving at first. "But I have a contract!" However, Mummy's straight face rocked the actor. Going on the set, Carter accosted co-star Claudia Christian over whether he "dies" or not. Christian quipped, "Yup, you're toast!" Oh no. Carter went to

leading man Boxleitner who replied, "Well, they replaced Sinclair..." By now, Carter was in heart-attack mode.

Eventually, Straczynski had to break it to the actor that his leg was being pulled and that everything was okay.

"It's not just a matter of killing characters off," noted Straczynski of the *BABYLON 5* difference. "Killing characters off is an easy thing to do. We do have the jeopardy that changes people irrevocably. The reality is that Sheridan is up against his own government. And that has a profound and permanent effect on him. It doesn't really have to be from being killed. That carries with it a certain amount of jeopardy.

"Certainly, among the cast when a script comes out, they all eagerly grab for it because anyone on this show, they all know that any character can be killed at any time. That goes for the smallest character to the

very top of the rung. It does go against television conventions, where very often the jeopardy is of an inconsequential sort. Will they catch the bad guy? Well, geez, you think? They always do. Will they defuse the bomb in time? Well, good chance! [Other shows] have to have a reset button at the end of every episode—so the next one can proceed as if it never happened. And we don't do that here.

"We're trying to do a show with a sense of wonder, a sense of ongoing jeopardy. I'll get closer one way or another. The key here is that this kind of dramatic device is not being used much in television."

3 Design A Collection of Characters That Visibly Evolve In Pre-designed Character "Arcs."

It's not groundbreaking for television, but Straczynski has designed an ensemble of characters with diverse personalities and backgrounds, each with a distinct character "arc" or journey that keeps us interested and intrigued. The usage of the "arc" became prominent with non-genre series such as *DALLAS*, *HILL STREET BLUES*, *ST. ELSEWHERE* and *WISEGUY*.

For SF-TV, the closest example of the usage of the arc was probably *V*, the mini-series and series. The reason that story arcs are rare, and character evolution all the rarer, is that so many television series are cancelled at half-season or even less, so there's little guarantee a five-year project will be produced or successful. There's also an assumption that arced stories don't do well in reruns.

For example, Straczynski has described the character of Ambassador Londo Mollari as being a very tragic figure. Londo's spectrum traveled from "light and funny, to dark and funny, to dark and tragic, to tragic and light," said Straczynski.

Andreas Katsulas as G'Kar with Majel Barrett Roddenberry as a Centauri "seer" in *Point of No Return*, "predicting the future for ambassador Londo."



Londo's nemesis G'Kar also started out as appearing to be the saga's villain, but as the show evolved, we came to see him as a highly sympathetic character.

Delenn, the Minbari ambassador, physically changed her appearance during the events of "Chrysalis" and "Points of Departure," transforming from a full-blooded Minbari into a half-human/half-Minbari hybrid.

The story of Commander Jeffrey Sinclair is equally evolving: After leaving BABYLON 5, he became both an ambassador to the Minbari as well as the leader of an underground rebel fleet known as The Rangers. During the events of "War Without End," a two-part episode, Sinclair went back in time inside the appropriated Babylon 4 station and became the Minbari religious leader Valen, and fought the Shadows 1,000 years ago.

Actions or inactions by each of the major characters resulted in short and long-term, as well as minor and major consequences.

"Once an actor walks into the role, it tends to change the role to some extent, just because you've been hearing their voices in the characters' voices," said Straczynski. "I always look for ways to tie the characters and the actors together. So that I can pull the strength of the actors and put it into the characters's background.

"Ivanova has gotten more loose since I've gotten more quality as a performer. Originally she was very rigid, very stiff, very officious for the first year. I told her to relax.

"Stephen Furst's Vir has come more to the foreground. The best combination is to see what the actor can bring to the table and the advance planning. He's the one person who walks with fire on all sides, and somehow by the grace of God comes out the other end intact.

"Some parts have fallen down, characters where ... the performance did not equal what the role is supposed to be. It's like Warren Keffer...that one never really panned out. I hadn't planned on it, so I just said, 'Kill 'em!'

"I was always planning to kill [Kosh]. That was a necessary element. [In the middle of third season] that was several episodes down the road and I was just not looking forward to doing it. I thought I had a place for it but in the episode the character sort of stepped forward and said, 'We got to do this now and in the following way...'

"When that happens, I've learned over the years, when a character comes up and whaps you across the head, you damn well better pay attention that something is going on here!

"Much in the same way that originally I had planned to have Londo to kill [Centauri Emperor] Cartagia. Up until two pages before that scene, Vir said, 'I should do this! It's better that I do it!' I listened to him and he was right!"

The task of evenly balancing 12 charac-

“Fandom constitutes a massive committee. If you start listening to that, you're pulled in a dozen different directions and you have nowhere to go.”

—J. Michael Straczynski—



Claudia Christian as Ivanova, at the controls of the White Star in "Matters Of Honor," a character written out of the show in its upcoming fifth season.

ters is a herculean one. Often in television history we've seen individual characters grow in popularity beyond the rest of the cast. "That only happens when you don't know where you're going," said Straczynski. "You're grabbing on to anything, when an actor comes in and is so popular in a role that the whole show shifts to that character. Because I knew where the story was going, that could not happen. It would not be allowed to happen. That's one reason why I said from the get-go, 'No cute kids, no cute robots!'

"The second you put a cute kid or robot in the show, the show becomes about that character. A gimmick character becomes the

show. In the same way that Neelix and the holographic doctor in STAR TREK: VOYAGER has become the hook of that show in many ways. Any character that's called a 'twitch' character, a Wesley Crusher or the kid from seaQUEST comes to dominate. We're rich in having a story ready to go and that never happens."

4

Implement Cost-Effective, Feature-Film Quality Computer-Generated Special Effects

Thanks to Foundation Imaging and Ron Thornton, the 1993 series pilot "The Gathering" introduced stunning, state-of-the-art computer generated special effects, garnering an Emmy for visual effects that year. On the series debut in the spring of 1994, the so-called three-dimensional "virtual sets" that existed only inside a computer became increasingly prominent and grander in scale.

The diversity of special effects required to pull off the series ranged from hardware space stations Babylon 4 and 5; one-man fighter ships called Starfury; designing the distinctive alien space vessels for the Minbari, Vorlons, Centauri and Narn. In fact, every time we visit Centauri Prime, we have exterior shots of the Palace. It's totally computer generated. Just like the Mars Domes.

Also, the vast interior of the space station was profiled in full glory in the second season cliffhanger "The Fall of Night." In this story we finally saw with our own eyes a secret behind the Vorlon ambassador, Kosh. The true visage of the Vorlons, however, were not revealed until the death of Kosh #2 in the fourth season episode "Falling Toward Apotheosis."

Dense, action-filled spaceship battles also raged in the episodes "Severed Dreams," "Shadow Dancing" and the climactic "Into the Fire."

"We came along at the right time to take advantage of the shockwave of that technology," said Straczynski. "We're still doing things in television which no one else does. Or tries to do, because they think we're nuts in the attempt. We do more shots per episode than any other series current or before on television. The fact that we can do it this way and staying on the air, would probably pave the way toward more science fiction in the future because one of the reasons that studios have been 'disinclined,' shall we say, to pursue science fiction in the past is that science fiction has invariably gone massively over budget. The V series almost single-handedly destroyed Warner Brothers Television. It was hideously overbudget. We show now that if you do things in a responsible, reasonable fashion, you can bring it on budget just like any other show."

5 Carefully Plan Production Methodology To Allow For A Workable Budget. Create Multiple Usage of Standing Sets. Design Imaginative costumes and Craft Award-Winning Makeup

Straczynski has always been aware that making a science fiction series without bankrupting the investors has been a challenge. He assembled a team of experts who carefully mapped out a plan that would allow the series to be produced efficiently and frugally while yet giving the show a galactic, futuristic sheen.

"Planning makes a big difference," said Straczynski. "Often, a lot of television, when they sell the show, they often have no idea what they're going to do when the actual show gets going. What we do is we approach the entire production process in a more reasonable, logical fashion. In a lot of other television shows new pages arrive at the stage when you're shooting! You don't get scripts until a few days ahead of time under the best of conditions. What we do here is we make sure every director gets scripts three to four weeks before we have to shoot. We're always three or four scripts ahead of where we are at the moment. At any new season, I map out what's coming that season. I give John Copeland, my line producer, a 'cheat sheet' for the season. So we see in episode 16 we're going to need this big set. By episode 12 we're going to have this CGI thing designed. Instead of having to do a lot of overtime, and a lot of last-minute planning, we have months to work up sets and scenes, CGI, costumes. It looks better and costs less.

"We also have a lot of people with theatrical backgrounds. In theater you learn how to move a few things around and turn one set into something else. All our sets are made to be doubled. Our consoles can all be taken out and be put in different configurations on the sets to make sets out of nothing. Some of our walls are set so that if you pull them out and turn them upside down, then you get a whole different set. Also, we use technology in other areas. Our composer Christopher Franke lives here in Los Angeles, and his orchestra, the Berlin Film Symphonic Orchestra, is in Berlin and he conducts them over a video link over phone lines. They record it over there and they send it back here by high-compression phone lines to adapt and we take it from there.

"Our matte workers work in Northern California via artists who work with ILM. It's a virtual studio. All the pieces are in these different places. We're just coming up with ways to do things which no one else is doing because

"We do things no one else does because we're small. We can adjust fast. Whereas studios, being dinosaur-like, can't bend fast enough."

—J. Michael Straczynski—

we're a small operation. We can adjust real fast. Whereas studios, being monolithic and dinosaur-like can't bend fast enough."

6 Single-handedly Write 50 Episodes in An Unbroken Stretch

To deliver his precious saga at the very best level possible, Straczynski completely shunned the use of staff or freelance writers during the third and fourth season. The series was evolving at such a rapid pace, that he elected himself to write them.

Beginning with the last six episodes in the second season, this teleplay writing marathon started with the pivotal episode "In the Shadows of Z'ha'dum," and continued to the very last episode of the fourth season, "The Deconstruction of Falling Stars," totalling 50 one-hour episodes.

(In the greater scheme, of the 88 episodes completed up to the end of the fourth season including the pilot, J. Michael Straczynski wrote 73 hours of scripts. But add the two upcoming TNT features, "In the Beginning" and "Thirdspace," that's a total of 77 hours of television.)

The only other single person to write an ongoing drama series at such length was the late Terry Nation for the British cult series *BLAKE'S 7* (1985) who wrote 19 consecutive scripts. Also, there's the science fiction Grandmaster, Ray Bradbury, who wrote every episode of his HBO and USA Cable anthology, *THE RAY BRADBURY THEATER*. He adapted 65 of his famous short-

Sheridan (Bruce Boxleitner) gets a briefing on billeting 25,000 troops from Paul Winfield as Gen. Franklin, father of the station's doctor, in GROPOS.



stories into a series of half-hour episodes over a period between 1986 and 1992.

Because Straczynski oversees each and every episode's scripts and post-production details, the series' continuity from episode-to-episode is unusually higher than most television series. Fittingly, Straczynski directed the series' finale episode, "Sleeping in Light," when it seemed the show was going to be cancelled during the fourth year. What has Straczynski learned as a result of this incredible experience?

"I've learned never to do this again!" he said. "For as long as I live. It's just the most hideous thing I've ever done. People see the strain put on me. I've gone gray [haired] in the last few years. It was necessary because of the changes that the story was going through and because each episode had more and more links with every other episode. It's kind of hard to pull out a piece of that and put it here to this story when you're not exactly sure where episode one is going to end and when episode three is going to pick up, so how do you do episode two? The [character's] lives are shifting throughout those episodes.

"I learned a great deal about structure and pacing and how to accelerate things. I also learned to push the envelope as far as we possibly could. There are some things happening in this season I never thought I could do before. But by the virtue of having done one full season, I learned to take more chances."

7 Keep An Unusually Close Rapport With Your Viewing Audience via the Internet and Conventions

BABYLON 5 was first publicized online by its creator on the GENIE network in November, 1991, a little over a year prior to the broadcast of the series pilot, "The Gathering" in February, 1993. Because of his unusually active and constant contact with fans via his presence on the Internet, Straczynski receives direct, intimate feedback to what the fans like/dislike about the show. And in return, he provides all participants with little tidbits, opinions, explanations and news. It's an extra layer of the show for the privileged few who are able to access the chatter.

The online culture devoted to *BABYLON 5* is available in many locations. Straczynski posts frequently to the online networks GENIE, CompuServe, America Online and the Internet's Usenet newsgroups. There's also a mailing list. The occasional Internet Relay Chat session is also engaged on a frequent basis. Other than *STAR TREK*, only two other SF-TV series have an equally strong presence on the Internet: *THE X-FILES* and *LOIS & CLARK*, now all but dormant due to its

cancellation.

Straczynski explained that the Internet is not a source for ideas to direct the series' storyline. "When I sit down to write an episode, the only voice I listen to is the one that's at the back of my head, a small tiny voice that says, 'And here's what happens next...' The moment you let any other voice get in the way of that, you're going to trip and fall over and never get up again.

"If you do that you're taking wrong lessons from the Internet. One of the reasons that television in general is in the condition that it's in, is because there are too many damn committees working on shows. THE TWILIGHT ZONE excelled because it was Rod Serling behind every frame of film and you knew that. Too many committees are the death of creativity. Fandom, as well intentioned, and as bright as they all are, constitutes a massive committee. There isn't any one 'Fandom thinks this!' because the views are remarkably diverse. And each perspective is very often different. If you start listening to that, you're pulled into a dozen different directions and you have nowhere to go.

"Our producers are very loathe to get on the Nets because of ... a number of net stalkers. I've gotten very abusive mail from fans. It can become all-consuming after a while. There were a number of problems recently. There was a case recently where someone sent me a file. The note said, 'My son did a JPEG [picture file] of a Star Fury. Take a look at it.' I downloaded it and before I could stop it, I saw that it was not a JPEG but ... a Trojan Horse [virus] file. It wiped out my Windows directory, it wiped out my DOS directory, my whole operating system was blown out and all the files beyond that. And left behind a little file that said, 'Star Trek Rules.' That's an example of the problems."

8

Ask Big Questions. Layer the Saga With Literary Allusions. Be Meaningful, Emotional.

Having the luxury of assembling a coherently unified storyline over five years has allowed Straczynski to use his extensive knowledge of history and mythology, to layer the saga with meaning, emotions and parallels without simply retelling the same old myth. He's taken familiar themes and archetypes and used them in innovative ways to create a foundation for his characters and situations. For example, G'Kar can be seen as a Cassandra figure, we recognize the thematic resonance



Jerry Doyle as station security chief Garibaldi, with Peter Jurasik as Londo, the Centauri ambassador, preparing for President Santiago's arrival, in "Survivors."

and usage of Tennyson's poem "Ulysses" and how it applies to the two station commanders, Sinclair and Sheridan. Plus, he sets up Sheridan at Z'ha'dum as an Orpheus figure. Also curiously, we see thematic parallels between Kosh, Brother Edward, and Christ in the two episodes "Interludes and Examinations" and "Passing through Gethsemane." Even further, we can see analogues between B5 and mythological characters. For example, Londo shares much with Faust and Morden reflects Mephistopheles. Using familiar thematic patterns helps B5 to ask the big questions and bridge the gap between television and literature.

"As much as how we're changing television is the nature of the questions we're dealing with," said Straczynski. "Very often in television in general, and science fiction in particular, the stories tend to be about the same old things. Will they catch the bad guy? Yes. Will they defuse the bomb? Yes. They're questions about the moment only.

"We address the larger questions that no one's really asking, which is: Who are we? How did we get here? Why are we here? Where are we going? Those really aren't being asked by anybody. There's a substantial hunger for that kind of discussion. There's the problem. Television provides too many easy answers. Not damn near

enough good questions. We try doing that.

"In 'Passing Through Gethsemane,' a Monk character who was a serial killer is mind-wiped and programmed to serve the community. The question becomes 'What is the nature of his soul?' Is his soul what he thinks it is, a good man in the community or the soul is the murderer that he is. Has he apologized to God for what he did? What if he didn't know what had happened to him? In the ethics of mind-wiping, does it work better than the death penalty? We provide the questions and the framework to discuss them. We hear about a lot of discussion groups that have formed up. We can use examples of philosophy classes. We're trying to deal with the really important questions of where we're going, what we're going to do. I think those are the meaty questions, that for the most part, television doesn't get into."

BABYLON 5 is a series that has beaten the odds. Unlike a lot of prime-time dramas such as DALLAS and DYNASTY which have died in syndication, Straczynski believes B5 will flourish rather than wither on TNT. "In those kind of serials,

nothing really happens in the long run," he noted. "In the final analysis it doesn't really add up to a whole lot. There are a series of resolutions along the way that build up as part of the show. I've heard repeatedly from fans who said that having seen the shows, they go back and watch them a second time and all of a sudden, it's a whole different show. They see things they've never seen before. Even on the third time, there's stuff they didn't see before."

A "prequel" movie of the week, "In the Beginning," will broadcast ahead of the series pilot "The Gathering" when the show begins its TNT run in the spring of 1998. TNT will also broadcast a second movie of the week, "Third Space," a stand-alone story taking place during the fourth season. A third, untitled movie of the week has also been commissioned by TNT. At press time, there's talk about the possibility of a sequel series titled THE BABYLON PROJECT: CRUSADE. To top it all off, TNT wants to run season five all the way through, sequentially, without reruns or breaks.

Conclusion: TNT's daily broadcast of this galactic saga just might launch the show into greater popularity than ever. □

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AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS

By Alan Jones

"I received this script and stayed up all night reading it," said actor Tom Everett Scott about why he decided to head for Paris and turn into a bloodthirsty werewolf. "I thought it was wonderfully funny and scary. Not just audience scary, but scary for me to do. How would I do all those stunts in heavy make-up?" What secured the job for Scott, the winning star of Tom Hanks' *THAT THING YOU DO*, was seeing director Anthony Waller's first film, *MUTE WITNESS*. Hollywood Pictures opens Waller's sequel to John Landis' seminal 1981 shocker on December 12.

After *THAT THING YOU DO*, people remarked on how much Scott resembled his *FORREST GUMP* director. "He made a horror film early in his career too! [*HE KNOWS YOU'RE ALONE*]," exclaimed the actor. "I'm not really a horror fan though. I'm very squeamish. I love well-made ones like *JAWS* and *ALIEN* but I can't sit through gore just for the sake of it. I do understand the fascination people have with movies like *A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET* and *FRIDAY THE 13TH*. but they aren't fun for me to watch. *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS* will be more fun because it has comedy, romance and terror. I like the idea that there's this whole clan of werewolves led by a psycho who wants to purge the Earth of scum."

But did Scott like the original *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON*? "Sort of...from a distance," he said. "It's quite dated now and is very static in terms of camera moves. I think stars David

Comedy, horror, effects, getting the right mix.



Jez Harris of Germany's Magicon readies an animatronic werewolf for filming at Studio Wecker in Luxembourg, matched with CGI graphics.

Naughton and Griffin Dunne generated a lot of chemistry between them. That's most memorable to me. The sequel has more characters, lots happens, and the way Anthony Waller edits means it will be faster-paced and have a far more contemporary feel. The original was loonier than ours but it was very much a 'stop, here's the special effects, start' story. That was the technology then. That's why it was so pioneering."

As for character research, Scott said he vetoed that idea early on. "Anthony Waller is a technical director and I knew exactly what he wanted. It was pointless for me getting into the psychology of Andy when all I have to do is be scared, fall down, laugh and look angry. Acting is quick thinking as

much as anything else and that's what I relied on. I have learned a new skill here though—bleeding! I'm taking an inventory of all my scratches and bruises. Friends in the business told me wearing extensive make-up was like burning from the inside. What can I tell you, they were right."

The funniest anecdote Tom Everett Scott acquired from the filming of *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS* occurred in the first week of shooting on the Eiffel Tower location. "Anthony said to us [Vince Vieluf and Phil Buckman], 'You know, I hate it when you watch a movie and you can tell when a character is carrying a suitcase or a heavy bag that there's nothing in it.' And we all said in unison, yes, we hate it too. So we were all given backpacks containing 50 pounds of junk so we'd look authentic. Climbing up stairs on the Tower for numerous takes took on a whole new meaning, I can tell you!"

Playing Claude, the head of the werewolf brotherhood Andy must destroy, is Pierre Cossi, one of France's most popular actors thanks to his starring roles in *STRANGERS*, *ROSE LA ROSE* and *LA BOUM 2*. "I play a skinhead by day and a werewolf by night," remarked Cossi. "I'm pure evil, not the usual werewolf type. Claude doesn't go out into the night and indiscriminately kill people. No, he has his own perverted logic. His point of view is he's been sent by God to cleanse the Paris streets of pimps, drug addicts, prostitutes and muggers, so he targets those groups for eradication."

Unlike the rest of the cast and crew on *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS*, Cossi didn't see the original Landis film—on



Waller's film features state-of-the-art CGI werewolves courtesy of Hollywood's Santa Barbara Studios, as Claude, leader of the werewolves, transforms for the climax on the Paris Metro.

“I watched the **SILENCE OF THE LAMBS** for Anthony Hopkins' performance...He remains calm, yet at any moment could explode with rage.”

—Pierre Cossi, villain—

purpose. “The only movie I watched in preparation was **THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS** for Anthony Hopkins' performance. His power in that film is tremendous but he never yells, he always speaks slowly and remains calm, yet at any moment you know he could explode with murderous rage. I've appropriated those characteristics and his energy here. I have a romantic image in France. No one would ever have cast me in anything remotely like this and that's why I'm finding the nuances unique and interesting.”

Prior to principle shooting, Cossi went to Magicon's Munich work shop to have a latex body suit cast for his prosthetic make-up transformation. “My major transformation in the church was a whole new experience for me and my first special effects work ever,” he said. “Equally weird was shooting my entry into the 13th-century church ruin on an empty piece of land because the abbey visuals will be added at a later date.”

For Julie Delpy, who plays Serafine, a good-hearted werewolf under Cossi's spell, **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS** represents her third fantasy film in a row. Prior to landing the role of the beautiful, but deadly, Serafine, the highly acclaimed actress starred in Enki Bilal's comic book fantasy **TYKHO MOON** and Jean Michel Roux's psychological science fiction epic **A THOUSAND WONDERS OF THE UNIVERSE**. “I wanted to do something entirely different and you can't get much different than playing a werewolf,” she said. “I've never done this sort of special effects film before. I'm usually cast in meaningful parts

where I have to learn reams of dialogue and appear in every scene. The luxury for me in **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS** is that I actually have days off in the schedule.”

Recently seen in **THE THREE MUSKETEERS**, **KILLING ZOE** and **BEFORE SUNRISE**, Delpy has worked with some of Europe's finest directors including Jean-Luc Godard (**KING LEAR**), Carlos Saura (**THE DARK NIGHT**), Bertrand Tavernier (**THE PASSION OF BEATRICE**), Volker Schlöndorff (**VOYAGER**) and Krzysztof Kieslowski (**THREE COLORS: WHITE**). She began her career at 14 years old but has never tackled a part remotely like Serafine.

“It took me ages to understand the character, the psychology of a werewolf. She's a reluctant werewolf, tired of contaminating innocent victims with her rabid bite as she roams the Paris streets. But you can't read books about werewolves and it took me a

long time to pin Serafine down. When I realized I couldn't build any personality frame to hold onto—apart from making her very hyper—I felt freed by the fact there were no constraints. What does a girl feel like just before the full moon when she knows she's going to transform into a hairy beast? Something like how she feels when she's going to have her period. That's the way I chose to play it, only more ferocious. The horror of PMS!”

Serafine was a part especially crafted by Anthony Waller for Delpy because he wanted to exploit her serious aura. “I can see how he was taken in by the serious persona I project in my other films, something I'm not, by the way. Anthony wanted someone who would make the change into a werewolf more dramatic because of the personality contrasts. That's why it will be scarier when I transform. I've never been able to scare people before, so it's rather fun. These aren't cuddly wolves in **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS**. They are vicious mon-

American werewolf Tom Everett Scott is confronted by Claude (Pierre Cossi) in his underground lair. R: Julie Delpy as Serafine.



sters. When I told my friends and family I was going to play a werewolf, they all went ‘Ahh!’ I might be slightly fluffier than the other wolves, but are they in for a surprise!”

Scott's Andy in the film is quite taken with Serafine and jumps off the Eiffel Tower in an attempt to prevent her suicide. But who wouldn't for Julie Delpy? I loved her in **EUROPA**, **EUROPA** and **KILLING ZOE** and was thrilled I was going to work with her.” □

Dark City

**CROW's Alex Proyas
on wedding SF to a
noir sensibility.**

By Chuck Wagner

Finally, after several threatened name changes, DARK CITY (aka DARK WORLD, DARK EMPIRE and god knows what else might have been considered) will be released—on Jan. 9. New Line Cinema had toyed with alternate titles at the behest of its parent company, Warner Bros. to avoid confusion with the October release of MAD CITY. But audiences are unlikely to mistake the bizarre futuristic landscape envisioned by writer/director Alex Proyas (THE CROW) with the present-

**ROCKY HORROR's
Richard O'Brien as the
sinister Mr. Hand.**



day New York of Costa-Gavras.

DARK CITY stars William Hurt as a detective on a murder case that doesn't add up. In a future setting Proyas takes an old theme in entirely new directions, a pet project he's long had in development. "It's something that's grown over many drafts and many years," said Proyas. "The germ of the idea came from the character of the detective. It was the idea of the detective—a classic sort of noir detective—being on a case that's something more than the usual. There are all sorts of questions that he can't answer, and as a result, he realizes that he's unearthed some mystery that's larger than any case he's ever been involved with in the past.

"To me, this guy is a man who is involved with facts and precision who just can't make things add up the way he's used to. He slowly starts to lose his mind and become unhinged."

Indeed, in DARK CITY, the mystery is like following lines of reasoning that don't converge to a point, where the solution lies. They diverge to madness ... and a vast truth.

"He cannot deal with it," said Proyas. "He cannot function, and as a result, he just loses his mind. So the movie's based on that concept—the



Alex Proyas directs Jennifer Connelly and Kiefer Sutherland.

whole world as a mystery. And when I started to examine what that mystery could be, I built this bizarre world that the film takes place in. All the other characters grew from that. It was through the process of developing the ideas that the focus shifted towards Rufus Sewell's character—the person that the detective is actually pursuing.

"To me, the tricky thing about this film as it stands now is that you can see it from many different perspectives. I tried to make it a rich narrative that you could examine from any character's perspective and see something different from those different perspectives. That, to me, is what's intriguing. It's a very uncommon approach from contemporary movies that are so linear, and I think a little on the dull side. They try to make one character dominate, I guess so they can attract big stars. That's the rationale behind it. And I really wanted to get back to some old-fashioned, complex storytelling."

Indeed, films like THE

MALTESE FALCON (recall how actually complex the plot was) probably could not get made today in that form. "A lot of those wonderful noirs of the 40s and 50s worked on this level," said Proyas. "They had a richness to them. You couldn't figure the plot out in the first five minutes. You had to concentrate. To me, combining that richness with the science fiction genre, I thought did the SF genre a bit of justice as well. Science fiction in Hollywood is so often used to just blow up cities.

"For me, the quest is really to come up with something fresh. In the wake of THE CROW, I was sent a lot of scripts, a lot of people wanted me to do things, and all the scripts I read were uninteresting. And I had this project brewing for long before THE CROW—maybe since 1990. And I felt on re-reading it, that it really had something fresh to offer."

DARK CITY exploits motifs from Greek mythology, in



Filming on sets in Australia, production design by Patrick Tatopoulos.

“Combining the richness of noir with SF did the SF genre justice as well. Science fiction in Hollywood is so often used to just blow up cities.”

—Writer-Director Alex Proyas—

lectually.

“To me, I don’t think of myself as a great writer, but I have had the pleasure of having that experience a few times.”

Proyas worked alone on the original DARK CITY draft, and then collaborated with co-scripters Lem Dobbs and David Goyer.

“I think the work grew to something that—for whatever strengths or weaknesses it might have—people aren’t going to be able to predict—to say, ‘Ok, this is what’s going to happen next’—which I think is the worst crime for a movie to commit.”

Proyas is currently working on QUATERMASS AND THE PIT for Warner Bros, but couldn’t discuss it. “There’s a few legalities hanging over our heads,” he said glumly.

Only recently it had been reported that production would begin in early 1998. What happened? “I don’t know,” Proyas said, when asked if production might begin on schedule in spite of the problems. “I hope so. It’s a project that I’ve always wanted to do ... yes, there’s a good chance that we’ll be making the film, but I don’t really want to say too much about it. I think the best thing you can say at this

stage is that we’re still in negotiations to make the film. That’s really where it actually stands right now, legally.”

We shall all hope that any problems can be overcome and that Alex Proyas—a filmmaker of tremendous talent—may proceed with his vision. But in the meantime, let us look forward to DARK CITY, a film from Proyas’ heart.

“Noted Proyas, “THE CROW was very me in terms of its visuals, but it had a simplistic story, which worked fine in that film. I want to push the boundaries a little bit, not just in terms of visuals but also in terms of story. I think DARK CITY is an attempt to do that. At the same time, I was amazed at the reaction to THE CROW, and obviously very pleased that people thought it was a good film. They talk about it even now. I hope they’ll like DARK CITY as well. It will give them something beyond just pure action.”

And the future?

“There’s a bunch of things. For me, I don’t know exactly what’s going to happen next. There’s been the odd discussion with people of making a film version of I, ROBOT, the Isaac Asimov stories, which are personal favorites of mine from way back. This is something that is very tenuous at this point, but it’s something I’m very excited about. And I write all the time. Right now I’m working on a very simple comedy. Not science fiction or horror. It’s been fun writing it, because you spend so much time coming up with the rules of the world for these fantasy-oriented projects. It’s actually liberating doing something that’s here in our world. It’s something that may or may not work out.” □

which mortals are manipulated by godlike beings according to a higher agenda. “I’ve never even been to Greece in my life,” Proyas said with a laugh. Though he has a Greek surname, Proyas was born in Egypt and considers himself now to be an Australian. He suggested jokingly that the connection may be “purely genetic ... I’ve never immersed myself in Greek culture. I do like Greek mythology and have read a little of it, so maybe some of it has crept into the work, though I don’t completely agree with that point of view.

“The thing for me is that these days someone sits down and says, ‘I’m going to write a film about *this*; I’m going to blend this film with that film. To me, that’s not the way I approach things. So often, films that are developed from literature seem so much more interesting because the initial idea was not created by someone with a factory

mentality that ‘We think this will sell.’ What someone is doing is sitting down and spinning a yarn, telling a story. The way stories are created organically, they often stem from a character. Often you come up with a dramatic situation and you sit down and write it. The exciting thing is that the characters come alive for you. They then take you to places you might not otherwise go if you sit down intel-

Connelly as Emma confronts Kiefer Sutherland as the unwitting Dr. Schreber in his lab. New Line opens the oft-postponed film nationwide January 9.



GENE RODDENBERRY EARTH: FINAL CONFLICT

Hopes are high it will be his first non-TREK



Kevin Kilner stars as Commander William Boone, with Lani Parker as alien companion Da'an (above) and co-stars Von Flores and Lisa Howard (below).



By Gary Kimber

Undoubtedly, the most eagerly awaited genre offering on television is this fall's launch of GENE RODDENBERRY'S EARTH: FINAL CONFLICT, formerly titled GENE RODDENBERRY'S BATTLEGROUND EARTH. It was changed so as not to be confused with Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard's series of novels published as *Battlefield Earth*. Syndicated by Tribune Entertainment Company (HERCULES, XENA) and produced in Toronto by Atlantis Films Lt. (SINBAD, RAY BRADBURY THEATRE) an initial commitment has been made to broadcast 22 episodes. Hopes are high that this will be the late Gene Roddenberry's first non-STAR TREK success. Previous pilots from the 1970s, THE QUESTOR TAPES, GENESIS 2, PLANET EARTH and SPECTRE, failed to sell.

Set a mere eight years in the future, the series concerns a race of aliens (the Talons) who have landed on Earth. Three years into their visit they have cured cancer, and ended hunger and brought world peace and tranquility to our heaving planet. All is not as altruistic as it seems, however, a circumstance the show investigates in detail.

Kevin Kilner (TALES FROM THE CRYPT) stars as intelligence officer William Boone; Lisa Howard (HIGHLANDER: THE SERIES) as Lili Marquette, Boone's right-hand woman in the resistance; Von Flores (SINBAD) is Sandoval, an FBI agent working for the aliens' betterment and Leni Parker is Da'an, the lead alien who oversees North America.

Executive producers include David Kirshner, Seaton McClean, Majel Barrett Roddenberry and Rick Okie. The producers are John Calvert and Stephen Roloff (FX: THE SERIES), who also doubles as production designer.

Roloff, relaxing before an all night session of shooting Episode 7, "Float Like A Butterfly," explained what the show is all about. "The story revolves around the arrival of an alien race on Earth—not a new idea," he is quick to point out. "We are trying to take some new approaches to the effects.

"Science fiction has always looked at it in a polarized light. Either the aliens are nasty as they were in INDEPENDENCE DAY or benevolent and misunderstood as in ET. There is not much in between. We have an alien race [the Talons] which appear to be both. It is not simplistic. We are not food and we are not facing a direct hostile military occupation of Earth. We want this complexity to be reflected in all aspects of the production."

Roloff was quick to disclaim any similarities to Ken Johnson's V. "Gene [Roddenberry] had written the original premise for the show in 1976, long before V debuted on NBC," said Roloff. Nor does he wish to jump on an INDEPENDENCE DAY bandwagon, though he acknowledged the film's success helped sell the show.

"INDEPENDENCE DAY had a script as shallow as a pond in August," said Roloff. "The phenomenal success of it could not have hurt us in the early days. They primed the pump for us."

Roloff is the man responsi-

RY'S LICT success.

ble for the two images of the aliens that we see. One is of a slightly ethereal, androgynous being and the other is what they really look like in their true appearance. On the surface they appear humanoid. This is for the human race's benefit. Searching photo archives Roloff used classic images of Buddha, Bodhisattva, Egyptian Pharaohs, Jesus Christ and religious and spiritual figures worldwide to establish a look that was both spiritual and graceful. "We arrived at a creature with a slightly larger cranium, elongated ears, a high arcing eyebrow and very large eyes" said Roloff. "Hopefully this creature will have a resonance with some of the archetypes out there."

Keeping in theme with the dual nature of the Talons, at certain moments they reveal their intrinsic physical appearance. The CGI effects are by Calibre Digital, with makeup by Paul Jones (HELLRAISER 3). "When they are in this pure state amongst themselves they are 100% computer generated," said Roloff. "Another effect we are doing is a transition from that state to the human skin version."

Even though Roddenberry has been deceased now for several years and did not write a script for his initial concept, Roloff is plenty thrilled to be a part of this historical event. "Like everyone else I was excited to be a part of a show with Gene Roddenberry's name attached," said Roloff. "It will be more humane, more moral, not just about gratuitous effects or violence. There is a story going on here about characters who mean something." □

MAJEL BARRETT RODDENBERRY

STAR TREK creator's widow takes on challenge of bringing his script to life.

By Anna L. Kaplan

Majel Barrett Roddenberry, known to STAR TREK fans of all generations as the widow of the Great Bird of the Galaxy, Gene Roddenberry, as well as the actress who played Nurse Chapel, Lwaxana Troi, and the voice of Federation computers, is venturing into new territory. She is the executive producer of a new syndicated show, called GENE RODDENBERRY'S EARTH: FINAL CONFLICT, bringing a script that her husband wrote in the middle of the 1970s to the small screen. The show is being produced by Roddenberry and David Kirschner, in association with Tribune Entertainment and Atlantis Films, which shoots the show in Canada.

"It takes place in the first decade of the new millennium," said Roddenberry. "It's just a few years in the future, as Gene described it, 'The immediate future.' It's thinking in broad science fiction terms, and yet keeping television practicality, production practicality. It's about a subject that you've heard so many times, [but] always after 1976, because that's when Gene wrote it. It's about an alien invasion of earth. However, this is not an ID4. The actual invasion is better left to the big-budget, one-shot movies. This takes place three years after they have landed. They are good, they're nice, they bring [much] to us. We no longer have any hunger, no war, but we also don't have freedom. Gene's theme, really the same that he had in just about everything, is that no matter what the reward



Executive producer and Roddenberry heir Majel Barrett-Roddenberry, making Gene's dream a reality.

for compliance, or the punishment for noncompliance, there's always that part of humanity that is going to fight to the death for individual freedom. As he says, 'Happy slavery is nonetheless slavery.'

"You can tell that somewhere down the line, there is an ulterior motive. Our 'companions,' which is what we call them, have another agenda. That will come out. We're going to deal very strongly with suspense, intrigue and mystery, perhaps like the old series MISSION IMPOSSIBLE. We're going to have a lot of fun with it, and yet we're going to be talking about the same things that Gene always talked about, love, hate, war, the same themes that Gene always used. Because a good story always starts with people. It has nothing to do with the science or technology. Gene never did know anything about that. But he knew people, so

that's what he wrote about. We're providing story lines because Gene had so many stories that we are utilizing besides the pilot."

About the actors in the series, Mrs. Roddenberry said, "One thing that we did insist on in all this, nobody was cast just simply because they looked the part, or they were pretty, or anything like that. These are all actors, every single one, and they're awfully good. Kevin Kilner is the [lead] actor. The show is very much about him. There is a female part in it which is very, very strong, Lily Marquette, and she is played by Lisa Howard. She was born in Canada, but she's been on the American stage, and in motion pictures, and she's a beautiful girl and extremely talented."

Kevin Kilner has appeared in HOME ALONE 3, as well as many television movies such as TIMEPIECE, and series including ALMOST PERFECT. Lisa Howard may be better known to fans of the science fiction genre, having played Dr. Anne Lindsay in HIGHLANDER on television. She also appeared in the films HARDBALL, BOUNTY HUNTERS, and REPLICATOR, as well as on television in DAYS OF OUR LIVES.

What about the aliens? Mrs. Roddenberry described them. "They're really different," she said. "They are more plasma than anything else. They have an outer coat of skin that they can control pretty much at will. But inside, when they start to feel any kind of emotions, they turn electrical, and they're blue, and different shades of blue. One of our leads is an alien, so

you'll see them intermingling quite heavily. There are only 71 of them left here. The rest of them have gone back to the mother ship, and other places, other planets."

Roddenberry is tight-lipped about the nature of the aliens' hidden agenda for Earth. "It's a mystery, and that's the way we're going to have it all the way through, until little-by-little we're going to unfold it for you. It's [sold in] 161 markets, which is about 95% of the country." Viewers with Internet access can check for a local television station, by visiting Mrs. Roddenberry's website at www.Roddenberry.com.

Mrs. Roddenberry noted that this is her first venture as a producer and not actor. "I've never done this side of it before," she said. "Boy, is this different. I really love it. Everyone loves this show so much. It's so full of passion. Everyone who's working for us can't wait to get to work that next day. The creativity that's coming out is unbelievable." She is also working with her son, Rod, who is also one of the series' producers.

Summed up Roddenberry, "Just to see it, and realize that one year ago I was sitting here staring at the script that was in front of me and saying, 'My God, are we ever really going to do it?' It was a pipe dream at that time. And to think that now it's happening is somewhat of a miracle." □

Not just another handsome face: Kevin Kilner as Boone, uncovering the alien's secret agenda.



REMEMBERING RODDENBERRY

Colleagues recall a man struggling to be more than a one-shot phenomenon.

By Frank Garcia

With the advent of GENE RODDENBERRY'S *EARTH: FINAL CONFLICT*, based on his 1977 script titled "Battleground Earth," there's bound to be a renewed interest in the works of STAR TREK's creator.

Unquestionably, the creation of STAR TREK dominated Gene Roddenberry's life and career, beginning with the 1964 original pilot film, "The Cage." However, there has not been a lot of attention devoted to a very interesting period between STAR TREK the original series and STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE, a time when the writer's imagination continued to flourish. Between 1972 and 1977, after crafting an unproduced TARZAN script, and writing and producing the 1971 mystery *PRETTY MAIDS ALL IN A ROW* starring Rock Hudson, Roddenberry segued into writing and producing four imaginatively diverse television films, which remained mere footnotes in studies of his life. These films, in retrospect, reveal that Gene Roddenberry's ideas extended beyond STAR TREK. He was not a one-note visionary, as many regarded him.

GENESIS II (1973) and *PLANET EARTH* (1974) sent us into a far-future Earth where humankind has fragmented and evolved into pockets of societies struggling to recover from a post-nuclear scenario. *THE QUESTOR TAPES* (1974) followed the adventures of a human-looking mechanical man in



Majel Barrett appears as a witch in *SPECTRE*, her husband's unsold 1977 Fox pilot.

search of his creator. And *SPECTRE* (1977) introduced us to a pair of criminologists who battle the dark evil of a demon released from a centuries-old vault. Of these four pilot films for projected television series, only *GENESIS* and *QUESTOR* generated enough excitement for the buyers that actual work was put into developing scripts or hiring staffers and building sets. Alas, none of them went beyond this phase.

Many of the principal actors, writers and directors who worked with Gene Roddenberry recall him fondly and recognize him for the imaginative talent that he brought to each of his projects.

Paul Rapp, associate producer of *GENESIS II* recalled that "I wondered many times that Gene wasn't just struggling, based on the success of STAR TREK to deliver something [*QUESTOR* and *GENESIS II*]

that maybe deep down, he subconsciously—because I don't remember him saying anything—that he couldn't match his masterpiece. I watched him struggle with much more rewriting than I would deem necessary, if you had it right the first time. I wondered if he wasn't a one-shot phenomenon.

"I really liked him and he really liked me. We were friends as we were workers. I keep wondering, to this day, that he wasn't one of those prodigies that had one shot."

Larry Alexander, who fruitlessly toiled on a projected *QUESTOR* television series, recalled, "Gene Roddenberry was, in my estimation, a terrific human being. I loved him dearly. He was a limited talent. But when he was good, he was very, very good. I mean, STAR TREK, the original concept was 'Wagon Train to the Stars,' that was one of those concepts that just is a grabber."

Screenwriter Juanita Bartlett, who first encountered Roddenberry while pitching story ideas to the ill-fated *QUESTOR* series development, recalled him as "a charming, bright man!" Her exuberance, of course, was aided by the fact that Gene liked her *QUESTOR* ideas enough that he invited her to join him, in co-scripting the *GENESIS II* sequel, *PLANET EARTH*. "I don't think Gene Roddenberry could come up with a premise that wasn't interesting. He was a brilliant man and had a fantastic imagination and I think anything that he dealt with had quality to it."

Director John Llewellyn



Roddenberry with NASA's Paul Smor (l) and Dr. W. J. Kosalca of Cal Tech on the set of *PLANET EARTH*, an unsold ABC pilot aired as a *Movie of the Week* in 1974.

Moxey, who helmed *GENESIS II* said of Roddenberry, "He was a lovely man to work with. He was wired. He had a lot of images in his mind and he was very helpful to me as a director, transmitting his thoughts to me, to see if we can put them on film."

Story editor Earl Booth, who joined the *QUESTOR* team to help create a TV series, remarked, "I thought he was a remarkable man," said Booth who remembers "terrible difficulties" that Roddenberry was experiencing at the time he knew him. "He was also producing a show at Warner Bros. at the same time [*GENESIS II*] and a show at Universal. He was having so much trouble that my impression of Gene, at that particular time, was of a man beset by so many problems that were so insolvable, that he spent a great deal of time hiding a lot, trying to get rid of the problems and not really facing them. Because there were no solutions. He was really completely beset by them. That was my impression at the time."

Michael Rhodes, the *QUESTOR* series producer, remarked, "Gene's a very creative guy. In his own way he was difficult ... he was not a man who took creative suggestions from the outside world with great applause. He felt he knew better than anyone how his show should go. And he probably was right! But he was not interested in what [the studio] had to say. He was only interested in what he had to say. He felt he was the creative force behind a show and it was his vision that counted, not a studio or network executive's vision."

For British director Clive Donner, working with Gene Roddenberry was a fruitful collaboration on *SPECTRE*. He recalled retiring on a daily basis during the film's shoot, to a nearby pub where the two would sit down and discuss the day's work. "The pub served fiery chili con carne, on which Gene had to be regularly dissuaded from overindulging. He told me something of his past. That he was the youngest son of

"I wondered many times," said producer Paul Rapp, "if Gene was struggling to deliver something that maybe he couldn't match—his masterpiece."

a Cavalry officer who had ignored him because he had a medical condition as a child, was physically weak and couldn't walk properly nor ride a horse. In his early years, Gene wouldn't play with other children but would find a soap box and crawl inside it and in his imagination roved the world and the stars.

"He grew out of his lameness and became a pilot for Pan American Airways, and once had to crashland at night in the Lebanese desert miles from civilization. His handling of roving nomads until the plane was found saved many people from harm. He enlisted with the L.A. Police and started to write. I wondered if these stories were Gene's way of trying out new writing that were in his head but I now know they weren't."

In the midst of the shoot, Donner recalled Roddenberry leaving for several days to attend a *STAR TREK* convention in Houston. "As a producer he never interfered on the set during shooting. He would have a quiet word with me after he saw dailies each morning and pass on any comments he thought would be helpful and was al-

ways complimentary."

If there was one disappointment for Clive Donner, in reviewing his experiences on *SPECTRE* and his brief professional relationship with Roddenberry, it was, "I'm sad I never got to talk to Gene again."

For Peter Beale, the 20th Century-Fox executive on *SPECTRE*, his greatest memory of overseeing the film's production was getting to know Roddenberry. "I didn't know much about him or *STAR TREK* at the time," said Beale. "I was able to get to know him. And remain in contact with him, and in fact, saw him a few months before he died. I think he's one of the outstanding brains and intellectuals of our time. It was a great privilege to have known him briefly and have a chance to spend quite a lot of time and talk with him. He was a leader of what we now call new-age philosophy. *STAR TREK* was a wonderful discussion of tolerance, anti-racism and anti-sexism. Brilliant! Here's a man who came with very tolerant views and expressed them in a wonderful way in the metaphor of [a] television series. He really was a genius, I thought!" □

John Saxon, Janet Margolin, Ted Cassidy and Christopher Cary in *PLANET EARTH*, one of four Roddenberry post-*STAR TREK* pilots that went nowhere.



FULL MOON RISING

Without Paramount, low-budget mogul Charles Band is going strong as ever.

By Dennis Fischer

Charles Band and Full Moon were put into eclipse after a breakup with Paramount Home Video, but Band indicates that rumors of his production company's demise were greatly exaggerated and he has a slate of forthcoming productions to prove it.

In the early 1980s, Band caught the wave of the brief 3-D resurgence, using his Empire Productions to direct two successful low budget efforts, PARASITE and METALSTORM. Now, almost 20 years later, Bands hopes to use Full Moon to introduce a whole new generation to the theatrical 3-D experience with a slate of three films. The first is THE CREEPS, which opened in 3-D in selected markets last Halloween and debuts on video—in a flat, non 3-D format—December 16.

THE CREEPS is an offbeat horror project which features three-foot-tall versions of the classic monsters Dracula, Frankenstein's monster, the Wolf Man, and the Mummy. The other two 3-D features to follow it are HORROR VISION.COM, which will be a hard R-rated film, and SECRETS OF THE MICROMEN, a Disneyesque PG film for kids. The latter will be directed by Randy Cook and features 3-D CGI effects.

THE CREEPS was inspired by Band's use of little people on various projects. He felt that



Band's latest, THE CREEPS, was released theatrically in 3-D last Halloween and hits video stores December 16, classic mini-monsters on the rampage.

“the notion of having shrunken monsters, especially if they are famous monsters like we have—Dracula, Mummy, Wolfman and Frankenstein—just seemed crazy and quirky enough to be different, and in the crazy business we're in, we need to have something that doesn't look like everything else on the video store shelves. That's more and more important every day because this market had gotten real difficult.

“3-D was an afterthought in the sense I was trying to find, amongst the projects I was working on, which would lend themselves best to 3-D. It made sense. It came together very quickly. We added some things which would work well in 3-D and I was lucky enough to have

directed these two movies back in the early '80s so I knew what works and what doesn't. It was barely eight weeks from concept to shooting.

Band hopes to be able to direct his next 3-D project, HORROR VISION.COM, as well. “I'm real happy with the script,” he said. “It's a big departure because most of our R rated shows have a pretty strong sense of humor. But HORROR VISION.COM is a straight horror film.”

The films will be released on video without 3-D, because, as Band explains, “3-D video in the current NTSC system is real bad. Anyone who tuned in to see the ABC 3-D shows didn't see much 3-D even though there was a tremendous amount of hype. Picture quality on TV is

just not sharp enough to deliver 3-D images.” But Band believes that in the future, high-definition television will enable 3-D television to eventually come to fruition, and he wants to have a library of 3-D titles all shot on 35mm film ready when it does.

Meanwhile, Band has formed his own video distribution company called Amazing Fantasy Entertainment. Following the breakup with Paramount, Full Moon product will continue to be released by Amazing Fantasy.

Amazing Fantasy also will produce between 12-14 films yearly, with plans to expand to 20-24 titles annually. Band has relinquished rights to the Moonbeam label following his break from Paramount, completing a few additional contracted titles for them, but is now in the process of developing his own new label of fantasy films, Pulse pounders, expected to appeal to the GOOSEBUMPS crowd. These are family fantasy films that “are a little edgier than the previous Moonbeam films I've made, and we're about to start shooting our third in this series,” said Band. “The first one is called THE SHRUNKEN CITY, directed by Ted Nicolau who has shot 17 movies for me over 20 years. He recently did VAMPIRE JOURNALS. We will also be doing a marriage of the SUBSPECIES and VAMPIRE JOURNALS series, because there is a link between those families, and

PRODUCER CHARLES BAND

“Not that volume is so important... [but] we can't just make a movie a year; we would be out of business pretty quickly. So the optimum number for us is at least a picture a month.”



The Mummy in Full Moon's *THE CREEPS*, released flat on video for technical reasons. Band hopes to reap 3-D revenue in future high-definition TV markets.

SUBSPECIES 4 will be out in the first quarter of '98.”

Band depends on a few important collaborators. “I have to come up with a storyline or the thread of an idea, a concept, a title, and sometimes a campaign because I have to sell the thing,” he explains. “I have writers, one in particular named Benjamin Carr—who is really a fantastic writer—and the script will get written and go back two or three times into a second or third draft. I stockpiled 30-odd projects during the last three years, and we're beginning to make these films.”

Another key collaborator is Band's main cinematographer, Adolfo Bartoli. “I think we have done 35 movies together,” said Band. “Years ago, in the '80s I had Mac Ahlberg, who did both *PARASITE* and *METALSTORM*, and of course Mac moved on to big Hollywood films, and I'm happy for him. The first picture Adolfo did for

me was Stuart Gordon's *THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM* starring Lance Henriksen, and we discovered this wonderful Italian d.p. and ever since he has shot every other movie we did. He really has a good grasp of 3-D and we really studied carefully a number of the older 3-D movies to see what works and what doesn't. So he's a real asset.”

While Full Moon is still the

flagship label, another label Band is developing is called Surrender Cinema, “which is sci-fi, fantasy erotica, adult erotica that is not by any means hardcore, but is pushing the envelope a little bit. These pictures are shot in very few days and usually find their home on pay-per-view and cable because that's where the audience is.” Band also releases titles under the Cult Video and Pulp Fantasy labels.

According to Band, the long-awaited *PRIMEVALS*, David Allen's dream project, is slowly continuing its postproduction. “Dave Allen and his crew have been working on over 250 stop-motion animation shots. He's now done 25% of the shots,” said Band. “*PRIMEVALS* will probably be released in 1999, and will get some kind of theatrical release because it deserves that. We are getting two shots a week, and those shots are ten seconds of movie. There's no other way to do it and still respect Dave's vision.”

Band expects that a third of his product line will be science fiction. “We have *STAR PIRATES*, which is pirates in outer space. We are now building the weaponry for *ALIEN ARSENAL*, which is about a whole cache of alien weapons which get into the wrong hands.”

Phil Fondacaro, as Dracula, leads the werewolf in *THE CREEPS*. Band has a full slate in preparation, including two more 3-D productions—back to his “one a month” quota.



Though there has been lots of speculation otherwise, Band characterized the dissolving of his distribution partnership with Paramount as “amicable. We had a very good relationship for seven years. They did a great job in distribution, but the deal wasn't working any more, the business was changing. The only thing I can say is that as an independent, you need to be really fast on your feet. Big studios take a while to react. Independents are responsive to new ideas and new technology.”

“Obviously, there are more fans than ever of sci-fi, fantasy, and horror—that's evident by all top ten grossing movies of all time. But the direct-to-video market, maybe because all kinds of bad movies have been shoveled in there, has shrunk, and the video retailers are much more selective, and they really are our customers, so unless we get them on the video store shelves, none of this makes any difference. So our work is cut out for us, to not only keep the quality there, but also to keep producing films that are different and well-made and keep as close as we can to the video retailers.”

“I think in the long term, I'm happier being completely independent and controlling my own destiny. Even though it has been a slow two years coming up to speed, we're now at the same point we were a few years ago in terms of output. Not that volume is so important, but to survive in this day and age, especially with this machinery, with the studio in L.A. and the various effects labs, we can't just make a movie a year, we would be out of business pretty quickly, so the optimum number for us is at least a picture a month. We're certainly back up to that speed and a little bit beyond.” □

PRODUCER'S NETWORK ASSOCIATES

**G. Philip Jackson & Daniel D'or
are bullish on sci-fi filmmaking.**

*By Chuck Wagner
& Gary Kimber*

Against a backdrop of market uncertainty at the 1997 American Film Market, there existed a movement which fans of science fiction films (and of course, readers of this magazine) should applaud. Science fiction films with \$2-\$6 million budgets emerged like butterflies from hidden cocoons and wowed audiences. With familiar actors, solid stories and the latest in computerized effects, these films seem poised to give filmmakers an alternative to cookie-cutter mainstream films costing tens of millions of dollars.

Companies like P.N.A. (Producer's Network Associates) are leading the way with films like *THE CUSP* (a.k.a. *FALLING FIRE*) a U. S. domestic co-production with Roger Corman's Concorde-New Horizon Corp. and *2103: THE DEADLY WAKE*.

Produced by G. Philip Jackson and directed by Daniel D'or from a story by Peter I. Horton, *THE CUSP* concerns a mission to orbit a resource-rich asteroid around the earth and the attempt by an ecological terrorist group to take over the mission and



Tara Maria as the Angel
in the *Transcending Gate*
in P.N.A.'s *CARVER'S GATE*.

ram the asteroid into the planet. The ensuing blast would "cleanse" the world.

Jackson and D'or founded P.N.A. Inc. in 1993 in Toronto. Jackson's first film as a director for P.N.A. was *REPLIKATOR* (1994), which went on to win gold medals at both the Charleston and Houston International Film Festivals. D'or's feature film directing debut was on 1997's *THE CUSP*. The two switched roles from an earlier

P.N.A. effort, *2103: THE DEADLY WAKE* (1996).

Against a backdrop of the rumors swarming out of the American Film Market last March, Jackson and D'or—visiting Los Angeles for the AFM—talked about their low-budget efforts in the genre. One prevalent rumor was that horror, fantasy and science fiction pictures were glutted and that either the whole lower-budget movement was dying or that at least science fiction films were.

Noted Jackson, "Essentially what's happened within the whole genre industry, prices have started to collapse worldwide. It's not catastrophic yet, but it does echo what happened three or four years ago in the domestic market. The whole international film market has been seized by an overriding panic. People who have traditionally been purveyors of genre titles are suddenly saying, 'Oh yeah, I'm developing a Henry James property!'" But P.N.A. is not being rattled by rumors and events.

"I very much believe in staying the course," Jackson said. "That course is quality. Better pictures. I love science fiction, though we may open a division that does other kinds of pictures.



P.N.A.'s *CARVER'S GATE* (1996).

But science fiction is what's been identified with us and that's what our buyers want from us."

Noted partner Daniel D'or, "You might jump to something else. Another genre. But it's across the board. The other genres aren't doing so well."

"The whole tragedy of our industry," Jackson said. "is that for such a long time there was a market for bad work. People would make garbage and get away with it and make an excellent profit. There is a whole sub-standard industry there, and I think it's those people who should feel threatened and not us."

Are low-low budget films

P.N.A., Canada's genre specialists.





Michael Pare as Carver battles a virtual reality demon played by Steven Hart.

dead? "I think that's always been a dangerous game," Jackson said. "There've been a lot of success stories in those, but those have always beaten the odds." Maybe there'll be fewer bad films inside those provocative cassette jackets.

So how did D'or and Jackson get together? "We actually met up at a funeral," Jackson said. "The deceased had introduced us while he was alive," D'or added. "A guy named Leo Zourdoumas, truly an incredible IMAX cinematographer. He had shot 70% of the KOY-AANISQATSI sequel but then died in a plane crash. Independently, we were friends of

Leo's. Phil had worked with him. I had started working with him. We had started developing two IMAX films."

Following the funeral, D'or and Jackson—who had been aware of each other for some time—began really talking. And out of that P.N.A. was born.

P.N.A.'s first film, REPLIKATOR, was perhaps the most difficult project imaginable for a new company. Starring Ned Beatty, the project was partially shot by another company which then fell into bankruptcy. D'or and Jackson didn't even like the story, but somehow they were able to rewrite the piece to use some of the existing footage

“For a long time there was a market for bad work,” said G. Philip Jackson. “A whole sub-standard industry there. Those people should feel threatened, not us.”

and have lawyers work out the tangled mess of the old and new deals on the film.

“But every deal is difficult,” Jackson noted.

“Each film takes fewer years off my life,” D'or added.

Prior to P.N.A., Jackson's first official film training was years earlier when he was able to sell a short film to the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation). “I sold it for \$200 in 1972 when I was 18 or 19. Got a job building shelves to hold film cans, then got thrown into the editing room when someone got sick. I became an apprentice writer for the CBC. Then after this privileged training, I studied film at York University in the Toronto suburbs.”

Daniel D'or, a native of Toronto, had emerged from Humber College film school in Toronto and gone into business. In a move which parallels the well-known history of Steven Spielberg and his camping out in offices of Universal, Daniel D'or used a similar form of chutzpah to storm the offices of Air Canada.

“I spent a year putting together an interactive travel kiosk concept. I took it around, hoping an airline would buy it. I didn't have two nickels to rub together. And then one day I got a check in the mail for almost \$800,000! I had kind of posed

as an Air Canada employee. I called the secretary of every vice president and told them their bosses were expected at this meeting. They all came. They, said, ‘Kid, interesting project, don't ever do this again, get out of here.’ But they bought it and I got this check.”

Using the funds, D'or created Greystone Production Services and helicopter businesses (note the nice aerial work—on a modest budget—in P.N.A. films).

It was 1996 that saw P.N.A. kick it into high gear with the making of CARVER'S GATE, starring Michael Pare and directed by Sheldon Inkol. Set in a future world where virtual reality games have left humanity addicted to this escape from life's emotional ups and downs, the addiction to a pseudo-life has left people open to all sorts of corporate manipulation.

After that came DEADLY WAKE, starring Malcolm McDowell (A CLOCKWORK ORANGE), Heidi Von Pallese and Pare. McDowell plays an alcoholic sea captain on a futuristic freighter loaded with toxic waste. Greedy corporate entities are involved who care little for Earth's future generations.

CARVER'S GATE was P.N.A.'s response to the marketplace. “After the success of REPLIKATOR our distributors

From 1994's REPLIKATOR to next year's bigger budgeted TITAN, P.N.A. is dedicated to a quality science fiction B-film agenda.



said give us another futuristic film with a virtual reality theme," said Jackson. "That set our initial parameters. Then Dan [D'or] and I created a very crude outline of a world where VR dominated. A world where there was a loss of hope for survival. Doug Bagot and Timothy Lee, a very able writing team, wrote a screenplay based on the outline. [Director] Sheldon Inkol then worked on the final drafts."

STRANGE DAYS, THE NET, and VIRTUOSITY were all big-budgeted Hollywood VR themed stories which the movie-going public rejected at the box-office, but Jackson professed no fear about his entry's possibilities. "Bad virtual reality films are played out, sure," he said. "It's a question of entertainment value of the individual picture. The fact it is VR is certainly not enough on its own to excite an audience. If it happens to be a dramatic element of an otherwise good story you don't need to fear the idea. Hollywood is afraid of ideas too big or different for a broad audience to accept. Almost every bad big budget sci-fi film you see must have begun with a good premise. The fear of losing that audience causes a more and more predictable picture to be made."

Also set in a far future dystopian Earth of war, depression and ethical corporate barrenness is P.N.A.'s DEADLY

MacKenzie Gray as First Mate Nigel Chan in 2103: DEADLY WAKE, at home with P.N.A.'s camaraderie.



“Almost every bad big-budget sci-fi film you see began with a good premise,” said Jackson. “Hollywood’s afraid of ideas too big or different for a broad audience.”



Malcolm McDowell as Captain Sean Murdoch, with sea spirit Heidi von Palleske in 2103: DEADLY WAKE, hauling toxic waste on the Lilith, a sea-going stealth freighter. Inset: Baby, the ship's 86-year-old Fetal-Neural computer, an embryo hard-wired to navigation.



WAKE. All the action takes place aboard an aging freighter, called *The Lilith*, which Malcolm McDowell captains. A business behemoth, Proxate Inc., has loaded this ship with a deadly biological weapon of which the disgraced Captain is unaware. They intend to sink the ship in the open sea, paving the way for an ecological nightmare of immense dimensions.

Jackson, who directed the film, is rightly proud of the fact he landed an actor of such calibre as McDowell for the heroic lead. "When he saw the first draft of DEADLY WAKE he was thrilled by it," said Jackson. "He was a great presence on the film. It is a script that takes advantage of his incredible strength. What was really interesting was to see the whole cast rally around him. It was an exceptional experience for me. I think it's a film we can be proud of for a long time. It is probably the one which will make our mark even more so than REPLICATOR. Corporately our goal is to make every film ex-

ceed the previous one. It should, because we are still learning. We don't want to get complacent about our work."

Brian Cole Models and Miniatures provided the special effects for DEADLY WAKE. After working on such shows as ALIENS, BATMAN, SUPERMAN, CLASH OF THE TITANS, and BLADE RUNNER, Cole emigrated from Britain sev-

eral years ago to set up shop in downtown Toronto. Cole's company crafted Baby, the 86-year-old fetus that serves as the nerve center that runs McDowell's supertanker. "Baby is made out of silicone rubber colored to skin tones and molded with a metal, animatronic rig-up set inside," said Cole. "It had full arm, fingers, eyes and mouth movement. The legs could slightly kick backwards and forwards. This was all the movement it needed being submerged in liquid with cables connected to a computer."

Cole's company also built *Lilith*, McDowell's stealth cargo ship, a model "26 feet long, and weighing 2 1/2 tons. It was built out of polystyrene and reinforced with plywood with loads of plastic sheets and thousands of lights for cargo holds, the bridge and radar."

Toronto actor Mackenzie Gray, who plays systems engineer Schneider in THE CUSP, as well as former British naval officer Nigel Chan in DEADLY WAKE, contrasted working with a young, enthusiastic company like P.N.A. to his stint on THE LONG KISS

GOODNIGHT, during filming in Toronto. "There were 85 people doing the job of one," said Gray about working on the big-budget Hollywood production. "Lots of people adopted attitudes. It seems to happen often when an LA mindset comes in. It is completely bogus and unnecessary. There was just a lot of unhappiness on the set. It was all kind of grotesque,

Michael Pare as Daryl Boden in zero gravity in THE CUSP, P.N.A.'s latest science fiction effort, which airs on Showtime in January.



something unpleasant about it from start to finish.

Practical joking between cast and crew on a P.N.A. shoot is a sign things are loose and fun. Gray got a reputation for pulling some doozies, including a gag on Malcolm McDowell filming *DEADLY WAKE*. "Malcolm had been trying to crack me up on my pickups and closeups," Gray said. "I had made him laugh unintentionally and he was determined to get me back. We are both from the theatre. I worked in Britain for many years. We clicked very well. There was a sense of fun, of mischief between us. He couldn't get me to crack up though.

"On the last day of filming there was a scene where these prostitutes were going to try and solicit him. He pushes them away. A rumble ensues. I was dressed up in heels, black tights and a veil to cover my mustache I went on as one of these extras. Just as the take began I said, 'Hi there, sailor. He didn't laugh but later appreciated the effort more than the joke itself.'

One of the problems of dealing with moderate budgets is legitimate overhead—insurance, star salaries, etc—which must be paid before you begin shooting. "What you actually get to put on the screen is 50% or less of the overall budget," Jackson said.

Another problem is the studio competition. "B-movies can't survive because there's too much A-movie product," D'or said. "And that is not changing. I think the studios will always maintain that. I think it's going to be very, very difficult for B-movies in the next five to ten years."

"Cable TV does balance it out," Jackson added. "Cable dollars are good."

One way of fighting back is to aim higher up the cost ladder and make films ever closer to the A-list. Jackson & D'or's next project, *TITAN* (concerning prison unrest and alien contact on a penal colony on Saturn's moon), is being mounted on a \$6 million budget—two to three times the P.N.A. norm.

"We're all trying to reach the masses," Jackson and D'or said. "That's the goal of a filmmaker." □

P.N.A.

THE CUSP

Michael Pare, cast and crew shine in a sharp little movie for Showtime.

By Chuck Wagner

A fine achievement in the field of moderate budget SF movies, *THE CUSP* features some familiar story elements—terrorists and asteroids—combined into a refreshingly new, well-acted and splendidly produced effort directed by Daniel D'or.

The feature has its world premiere on Showtime in January as part of the Roger Corman Presents movie series. Corman served as the film's executive producer and set up the Showtime deal.

A spaceship—seemingly haunted by bad luck—seeks to steer an asteroid into earth orbit for the purpose of mining. But an ecological terrorist group wants it stopped in the worst way—they want the asteroid to hit the earth, thereby cleansing it of man. And they have a terrorist on board who just might succeed. Can Daryl Boden (Michael Pare) stop the plan?

Meanwhile, Boden's ex-wife Marilyn (Heidi von Palleske) has been drawn back into the anti-terrorist game on earth to try and stop Lopez (Christian Vidoso), the eco-terrorist.

Featured in *THE CUSP* and other P.N.A. movies is Michael Pare—best-known to American audiences from films like *EDDIE AND THE CRUISERS* and *STREETS OF FIRE* and to sci-fi fans from his work in *THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT* series of films. Recently, Pare described how a Brooklyn native and former chef became involved with two guys from



Michael Pare and Zehra Leverman make love in zero G, while saving Earth from a rogue asteroid.

Canada.

"A year-and-a-half ago, my agents got in a conversation with Dan [D'or] and Phil [Jackson]. She pitched them big-time to me, saying these guys are comers, they're going to be big film makers. I did a very low budget picture with them for my first experience, and I saw they had a great machine. They knew how to make movies."

THE CUSP furthered that opinion.

"Yeah, I think they did brilliant work. It's amazing. Because we shot the whole film on a soundstage. Never outside. It was all like...dark everywhere, except where the camera was pointing."

THE CUSP features some fine spacewalk sequences—rare in lower budget fare. "We used wires," said Pare. "You wear this whole rig and wires come out of your hips and...hopefully you

can get some balance going. If you got good stomach muscles you can get horizontal."

Several dramatic sequences involve spacewalks near an asteroid and near a spaceship. Pare laughed at the memory of the reality of working in a world of CGI-post-production. "All that stuff I'm looking up at every time I'm in my chair—there's nothing there! There's nothing there at all!"

Pare also worked with Roland Emmerich and Dean Devlin on *MOON 44*. Dean Devlin was an actor in the film. "I had a ball with them. It was ten weeks in another warehouse situation. In Germany. It was his

[Roland's] father's warehouse. His father had a furniture company. All the sets were made out of packing for the furniture. That whole spaceship was built out of styrofoam packing!"

Good plotting and tight direction make *THE CUSP* not only an interesting story with surprises, but a joy to watch. Great effects—both visual and sound—and great performances (especially by Michael Pare, Heidi von Palleske and Zehra Leverman) enliven the suspense. Lush outdoor settings for some of their encounters relieve the set-feel which can plague lower-budget efforts. If there is the slightest moment which doesn't ring right, it's in a momentary attempt to introduce domestic discord into the film.

Other than that quibble, *THE CUSP* is on the cusp—sharpened to a razor's edge. □

THE TERMINATOR & PHILIP K. DICK

An insider's view of how James Cameron may have been inspired by the master.

By Daniel
Gilbertson

Many movies take their time getting to the screen. SCREAMERS is no exception. It was born in 1953, as a short story in *Space Science Fiction* magazine. The earliest screenplay drafts were written in 1980. Finally, in 1996, the movie, starring Peter Weller, began boosting popcorn sales at a theater near you.

What is noteworthy about SCREAMERS, however, is not the 43 years it took to reach the screen, but rather the role this story played in catapulting one of Hollywood's most dynamic duos into fame and fortune. As it turns 12, THE TERMINATOR is almost grownup, old enough to know its father and learn, and perhaps even profit from, the true story of its birth.

When THE TERMINATOR landed on our silver screens in 1984, its fantastically imaginative story was attributed to James Cameron and his writing partner Gale Anne Hurd. Hurd had no track record as a writer and Cameron's only previous offering, PIRANHA II: THE SPAWNING, provided few indications of such Herculean talent. It wasn't long before science fiction legend Harlan Ellison began suggesting that THE TERMINATOR's writing credits were—how shall we say?—more than a little economical with the truth.



James Cameron rehearses Arnold Schwarzenegger in THE TERMINATOR in 1984. Was the film's vision Cameron's, or was he inspired by the writings of Philip K. Dick?

Ellison threatened to sue for plagiarism and would doubtless be happy to tell you all about it, except that the terms of his settlement agreement include the usual clause insuring silence. Interested readers can find a detailed account of the Ellison/Cameron copyright infringement clash in "The Terminator: No More Mr. Nice Guy" (*Cinefantastique*, October 1985). Yet, long after the checks cleared, there was still one name missing from THE TERMINATOR's credits, a creative genius whose output rivals even Ellison's: Philip K. Dick. Cameron's big-budget THE TITANIC opens in theatres this month, and it is reported that he has no plans to return to THE TERMINATOR saga that made his success.

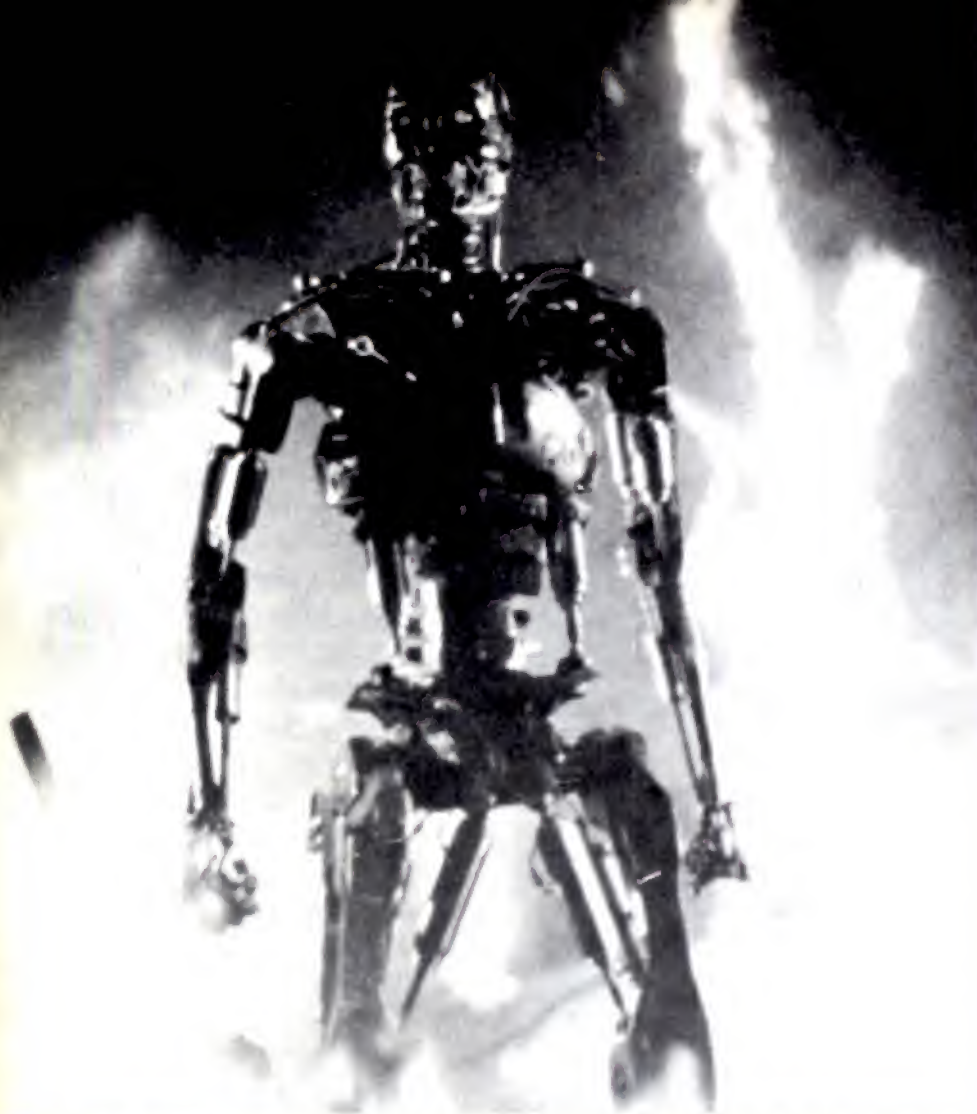
The late Philip K. Dick was one of Hollywood's greatest storytellers. His novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* became BLADE RUNNER. Dick's short story, "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale" was filmed as TOTAL RECALL. And there are other hit movies that belong on Dick's list of credits. With THE TERMINATOR's sequel, the top-grossing film of 1992, and T3 the pivotal point in Cameron's \$500,000,000 12-picture production deal at Fox, it's time to set the record straight regarding Dick's role in kick-starting this exceptionally lucrative gravy train.

For me it all began around 1960 when I read a short story Dick had penned some seven years earlier. It was a powerful

anti-nuke statement based, as I learned much later, on grim tales of World War One trench warfare Dick had heard at his father's knee.

Fast forward twenty years to Hollywood's Sunset-Gower Studios and Harry Cohn's former executive dining room above the Writer's Courtyard. I was a movie development person at Capitol Pictures and good product was, as usual, scarcer than hens' teeth. Every day I ploughed through umpteen scripts and books, eager to find the kind of film for which Hollywood was invented, the Blockbuster. In 1979, reflecting on the recent runaway global success of STAR WARS, I set my quixotic sights on a futuristic technothriller.

Through the L.A. Science Fantasy Society, I contacted a science fiction consultant called Doug Crepeau. After many false starts we obtained a copy of Philip K. Dick's 1953 short story, "Second Variety." Reading Dick's stirring yarn, I realized that this was the anti-war story which had made such a strong impression on my young mind years earlier. In addition to its searing anti-war theme, Dick described a new type of weapon, self-replicating killing machines called "claws." Although these claws built themselves in many different shapes and sizes, the deadliest variety, the second variety, was a humanoid robot.



THE TERMINATOR emerges from the flames, its fleshy android covering burned off, an image straight out of Dick's story "Second Variety."

Capitol Pictures shared my enthusiasm for Dick's short story. I wrote a film treatment based on "Second Variety." In place of a downbeat ending in which humankind is wiped out by claws, I gave Dick's story an upbeat finale, more appropriate to Hollywood's traditional love of sequels. In tribute to the story's claws, I called the movie C*L*A*W which I spelled out as "Cybernetic Learning Anti-personnel Weapon." My employers liked this 19-page treatment so much that they sent me off to register it at the Writers Guild of America, West Inc. On my return they authorized me to look into acquiring the film rights to "Second Variety."

Through a mutual friend, I contacted Philip K. Dick and drove down to Santa Ana to meet the great man. In a typical Dickian plot reversal, instead of the lavish home I'd imagined, I found a cramped third-floor apartment in an unimpressive building that was going condo. Dick's main worry was finding enough money to buy his condo. Fortunately, the money Capitol Pictures paid for the film rights to "Second Variety" helped ease this pressing problem.

Next to locate a screenwriter. There was no better candidate than Dan O'Bannon, then riding

high on the success of ALIEN, so off I sped to his apartment in Rancho Park. As soon as I mentioned Dick, O'Bannon tugged a screenplay off his shelves. It was TOTAL RECALL, his adaptation of Dick's short story, "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale." In a coincidence worthy of a Philip K. Dick novel, I was talking to one of the writer's greatest fans. O'Bannon liked the idea of adapting "Second Variety," so long as he could also make his directing debut on the picture. Soon his agent and my employers were busy "negotiating" with each other.

To bolster their bargaining position, Capitol insisted that I continue searching for a writer, preferably an unknown (without a shrewd agent) who'd "work cheap." One of the many eager writers who flooded into my office was James Cameron. We talked about the story and discussed cost-effective ways of generating the movie's extensive special effects. I predicted that the person who directed Capitol's film would be right in line to direct the ALIEN sequel. Discovering that we were both dive-certified, Cameron and I also discussed scuba diving. In evidence of his abilities, Cameron left behind some writing samples. Unfortunately,

CLAW, FROM "SECOND VARIETY"

"The verdict that counted was Philip Dick's: 'A winning script. Sensational ending, better than my original story. I read the last line, emitted a shriek and fell over backwards.'"

Capitol Pictures found these screenplays lacking.

Early in 1980, Capitol hired O'Bannon to write and direct a screenplay based on "Second Variety." Shortly after he delivered his first efforts, Hollywood's ubiquitous "creative differences" began to separate my employers and O'Bannon. Capitol was concerned for example, that despite Barbara Bach's 1979 movie of the same name, O'Bannon insisted on calling the claws, and then the movie, SCREAMERS.

In May 1980, O'Bannon was hospitalized with a serious illness and missed an important deadline. My employers granted him an extension and then they grew impatient, threatening to fire me and sue O'Bannon.

In a last-ditch attempt to save the project, Doug Crepeau and I sat down at a borrowed Radio Shack computer and wrote a script, CLAW, based on my "Second Variety" treatment. True to Dick's source material, we came up with a nonstop, intelligent action film replete with ironic twists and an ending which left the door open not just for a sequel but also an entire series. Capitol Pictures loved CLAW but, for me, the verdict that really counted was Dick's: "A winning script... Sensational ending, better than my original story. The last line has tremendous punch. I read it, emitted a tremendous shriek and fell over backwards!"

My employers decided to market CLAW in place of O'Bannon's SCREAMERS screenplay. For "commercial reasons," however, they listed Dan O'Bannon as "writer" on both the movie poster and the screenplay's fly page.

"Second Variety" touches on Dick's great obsession, "What is Human?" His other great theme, "What is Reality?" haunted me as I shepherded the CLAW project around Hollywood's frantic offices and plush, expense-ac-

count restaurants. These solid, opulent settings turned into shifting quicksand every time major movers and shakers lavished praise on O'Bannon for the work Crepeau and I had done.

And, in a blackly hilarious twist typical of those endured by Dickian protagonists, I was unable to speak up for fear of losing my job and with it my only link to the movie project.

And what a hot property CLAW had become. Capitol's attorney, Peter Dekom, told us: "It's the best science fiction script I've ever read." The script to SUPERMAN director Dick Donner. I contacted ALIEN designer H. R. Giger who agreed to design the claws.

Flush with success, my employers threw a lavish Christmas Party at the Vine Street Brown Derby restaurant. Dick elbowed his way through the buzzing swarm of scheming self-promoters and handed me the BLADE RUNNER script. At that time, ALIEN director Ridley Scott's BLADE RUNNER was widely considered the hottest project in town, the next STAR WARS. In another typically Dickian coincidence, Scott had set up his Android design studio practically alongside

Science fiction visionary, Phillip K. Dick's stories closely parallel the plot and imagery of THE TERMINATOR.



Capitol Pictures' offices. At the party, Dick told us how much he loathed Scott's reworking of his novel while lavishing praise on CLAW's faithful adaptation of "Second Variety." It was the greatest Christmas present he could have given me.

Early in 1981, Dick followed-up his verbal praises with a congratulatory letter in which he specifically thanked me for keeping him in the loop: "I want to thank you for involving me in the project as it has developed; I really appreciate that. I know that you value my opinion because you have asked for it at each stage of the project."

It is difficult to reconcile the spirit and content of this letter with Dick's words as reported by Paul M. Sammon in his otherwise excellent recent book, "Future Noir: The Making of Blade



Schwarzenegger's *TERMINATOR* makes his way through a devastated rubble-strewn future as described in Dick's stories. Left: Jennifer Rubin and Peter Weller ultimately starred in "Second Variety" when it was filmed as *SCREAMERS*

Runner." Per Sammon, in 1981, Dick told him that no one from CLAW "made any attempt to keep me informed of their progress. That I found rather insulting. It's also one of the things I don't like about Hollywood."

Meanwhile, I too was discovering a few things that I didn't like about Hollywood. As I filed Dick's letter carefully away, Capitol's attorney Peter Dekom called to announce, "We've got a bite." He was referring to Hemdale, an independent production company which was offering to finance CLAW.

Back then we had no idea that the owner of Hemdale, John Daly, would be profiled in a 1988 *Wall Street Journal* article: "All over Hollywood, the soft-spoken, sad-eyed Mr. Daly is described as a kind of cuddly barracuda who is murder to do

business with, a man so loath to pay and so frequently sued that some have demanded escrow arrangements before dealing with him." According to the *Hollywood Reporter* (6/4/92) the Screen Actors Guild and the Directors Guild of America are still trying to collect residual payments from Daly for *THE TERMINATOR* and other films.

On the morning of our scheduled meeting with Daly at Capitol Pictures' offices, his associate telephoned me. "Come over here," he demanded. "John never leaves his office." I reminded him that the meeting had been set for our offices. It was indicative of Daly's desire for CLAW that he backed down and made the drive from West Hollywood to Capitol Pictures.

Early the next day, Daly called with a co-production deal

to shoot CLAW in Mexico City. But Capitol also had interest from Bob Rehme at Avco-Embassy. Rehme's enthusiasm turned into an offer to open CLAW on Memorial day, 1982.

Capitol's attorney, Peter Dekom predicted that CLAW would do \$80 million in sales. Major companies like Orion and MGM began sniffing around, eager to snare the booty.

One morning my employers called me into their office and told me that they'd "always seen the script with one name on it: O'Bannon's. After all, you and Doug aren't members of the Writers Guild." The scene was worthy of Dick himself. I began wondering if I was the only one in the room who hadn't received the memory implant.

My employers offered to pay me a screenwriting fee as part

of my producing fees in exchange for giving up my writing credit. I reminded them that only the WGA could determine the movie's writing credits.

In early December, 1981, almost exactly two years to the day since I had written and registered my "Second Variety" treatment, I found that my key no longer unlocked Capitol Pictures' offices. Luckily the WGA rallied to my defense and instituted a credit arbitration. After reviewing the short story, my treatment and five screenplay drafts, the WGA's arbitrators determined that I and my writing partner were, indeed, CLAW's true authors. Capitol was obliged to pay Crepeau and me WGA minimums for writing CLAW. My job at Capitol was of course, forfeit to this decidedly Pyrrhic victory. The CLAW screenplay passed through several hands before being bought by Charles Fries (who brought it to the screen as *SCREAMERS* in 1996).

Fast forward to 1984 and a dark movie theater in Westwood. Orion was exhibiting *THE TERMINATOR*. Several obvious similarities between Hemdale's movie and the CLAW script quickly became apparent, and not just because both are relentless, high-tech chases in which futuristic robots pursue humans across devastated landscapes.

Let's begin with the most obvious, the lead character, the Terminator itself. There's a maxim in Hollywood that a thriller is only as good as its villain. Ideally, you aim to create an enduring, recurring character, a franchise for future films. *THE TERMINATOR*'s poster boasted a Washington Post quote, "Schwarzenegger creates an inimitable villain, an unstoppable killing machine, part metal, part man."

"Inimitable" indeed. Perhaps that's what Dick thought when he first described this exact mechanical horror in 1953. As science fiction author Ray Faraday Nelson pointed out in the Philip K. Dick Newsletter, "Why would anyone want to make a machine in the shape of a man? It's inefficient! The shape of a machine is determined by its function, and there's only one function that demands the use of machines that look like men.

That's fooling people! Philip K. Dick realized that, but he was the only one."

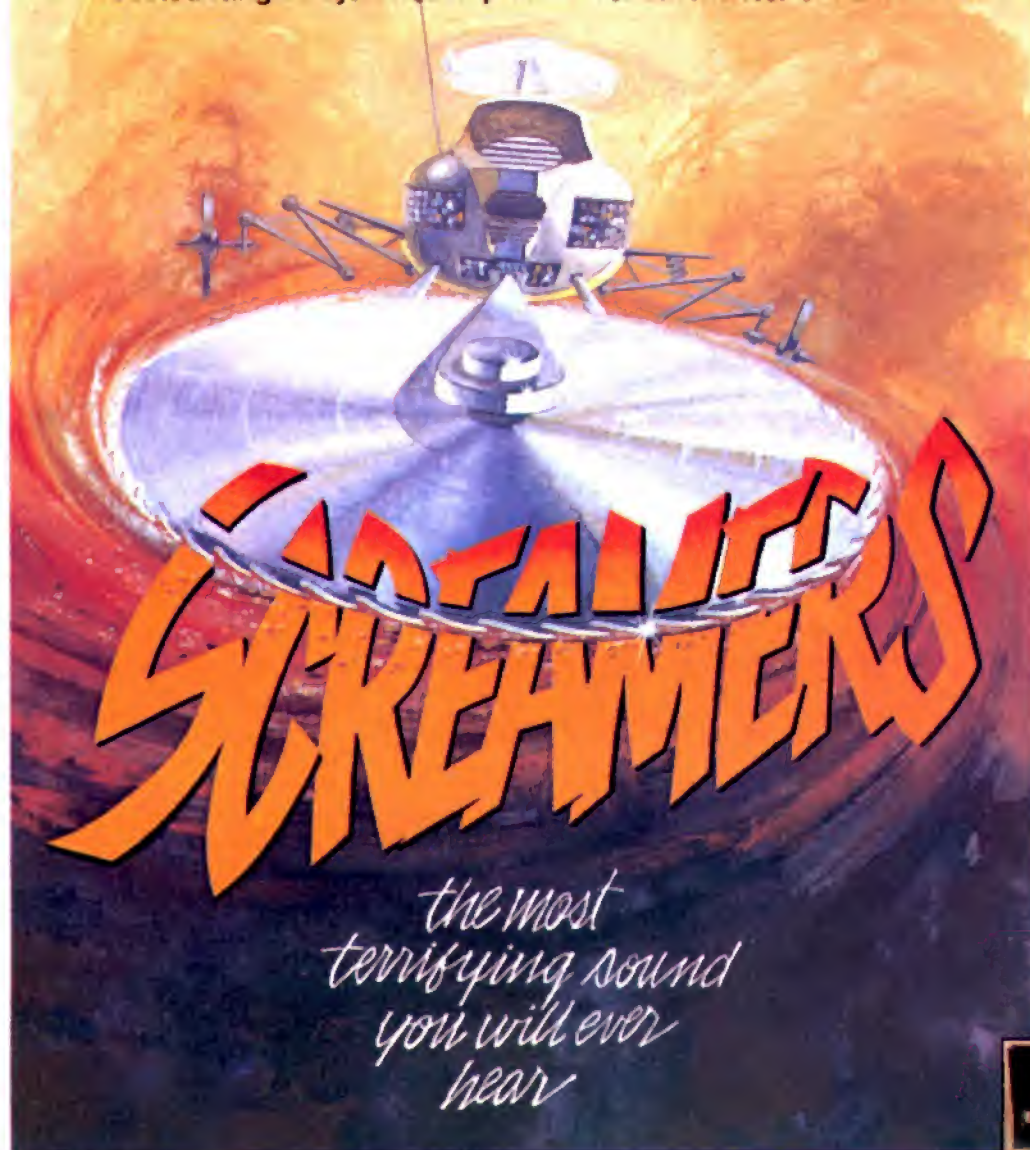
Before Dick of course, many stories had dealt with human-like monsters turning against their creators. Dick extended this idea. His monstrous killing machines start improving themselves in a process similar to accelerated human evolution. Thus, in "Second Variety," "Jon's World" and to a lesser extent in "Autofac" (1955), he creates an inhuman enemy capable of learning and evolving. The "claw" is your worst nightmare—the ultimate foe—ruthless, inventive and untiring—nothing less than a Frankenstein's monster for our modern era of nanoprocessors and micromolecular meddling.

Once you've got a novel leading machine, you need an exciting setting. The 2029 sequences in *THE TERMINATOR* depict a nuclear-war annihilated future exactly like the devastated post-Armageddon world Dick described in "Second Variety," right down to the "rubble-strewn ground, with the ruins of buildings standing out here and there like yellowing skulls."

An unforgettable title character and riveting settings are important, but a story stands or falls on its ideas. When you're talking good ideas, you're once again deep in Philip K. Dick territory: "There had been two wars. The first was man against man. The second was man against the claws—complex robots that had been created as a war weapon. The claws had turned on their makers, designing their own new types."

In both "Second Variety" and *THE TERMINATOR*, Earth's survivors are fighting a final desperate battle against war machines run amuck. In both, the war machines are building themselves in automated factories. In both, humans hide from the machines in underground bunkers. In both, the machines build humanoid machines (claws a.k.a. terminators) designed to trick their way into the bunkers and wipe out those sheltering inside.

In "Second Variety's" companion story, "Jon's World," the claw-human conflict prompts a



A SCREAMERS ad from 1984. R: Development exec Daniel Gilbertson, circa 1980. Cameron wanted a screenwriting job on SCREAMERS but wasn't hired.

chase through time with the future of humanity at stake. Sound familiar? Read on, it gets better. Or better yet, read "Jon's World" for yourself. If you do, you'll find that the lead characters travel back in time and change history by killing the scientist responsible for the first claws before he has a chance to design or build them. "Second Variety," "Jon's World" and both *TERMINATOR* films take as their central theme Dick's idea that machines built for war against human enemies have set themselves free and now threaten all humanity.

In "Jon's World" we also find the second central theme of both *TERMINATOR* movies: returning through time to an era before the war to change the future by altering the past. Revealingly, in both "Jon's World" and *TERMINATOR 2*, the time-travel mission involves locating the scientist/engineer working on the claw/terminator circuitry who is then killed during a workplace battle.

THE TERMINATOR's screenplay was written by James Cameron with Gale Anne Hurd. Hurd's recollections of the scripting process are that Cameron wrote at night for two months while she raised the money. Hurd has spoken eloquently of

Cameron returning again and again to one indelible image: a dream of *THE TERMINATOR* emerging from flames.

Compare this inspiring visual with the following excerpt from page 88 of the *CLAW* screenplay: "Behind them, the *CLAW*'s silhouette begins to rise from the wreckage. The collision has removed all hair and psuedoflesh, exposing a bizarre, metallic hide. One side of the face is untouched, the other is a metallic horror... As it moves, it is clear that the claw is still in working order."

In March 1995, Cameron appeared on the TV show, *DAY ONE*, proudly brandishing two sketches of a robot. One shows a metal skeleton crawling forward. The other depicts a ravaged half-human, half-metal face. These images, he tells us, were his inspiration for writing *THE TERMINATOR* script. The urge to draw them popped into his head one day while he was lying in bed. Cameron neglected to mention what, if anything, he was reading at the moment this extremely lucrative inspiration struck.

At the risk of seeming boastful, I might also point out similarities between the *CLAW* screenplay and *THE TERMINATOR* which

do not appear in either of Dick's stories. In *CLAW* for example, each claw is identified by a Universal Products Code mounted on its surface. This simple visual reinforced Dick's warning about the growing domination of technology over our lives. It also had no small claim to originality. In 1979, I certainly had never seen the UPC used in a movie. Of course, this changed some five years later when, in 1984, Reese the time-traveler rolled up his sleeve to show Sarah the Universal Products Code "like the automatic-pricing marks on product packages" which the Terminator had branded onto his arm.

The *CLAW* screenplay also gave claws the ability to flawlessly imitate human



voices. Like the Universal Products Code, this is an integral element of the *CLAW* screenplay which doesn't appear in "Second Variety." Both *TERMINATOR* movies of course, make extensive use of this device, especially when the terminator wants to fool people over police radios or the phone.

When Philip K. Dick's fertile fingers slipped off the keys in March, 1982, he had been on this planet a mere 53 years. As usual, Dick was far, far ahead of his time. He still is of course, and although movies have been made from his work, Dick has yet to be really "discovered," especially in his own country.

Without him there would never have been a terminator. If movies continue to use Philip K. Dick's work without attributing it to him, this uniquely gifted author never will get the widespread recognition and respect his powerful writings so richly deserve. □

CONAN

Former Mr. Universe and Schwarzenegger wannabe Ralf Moeller plays the pulp hero.

By Scott Tracy Griffin

"Between the years when the oceans drank Atlantis and the gleaming cities, and the years of the rise of the sons of Aryas, there was an age undreamed of, when shining kingdoms lay spread across the world like blue mantles beneath the stars. Hither came Conan the Cimmerian, black-haired, sullen-eyed, sword in hand, a thief, a reaver, a slayer, with gigantic melancholies and gigantic mirth, to tread the jeweled thrones of Earth under his sandaled feet."

Thus did pulp writer Robert E. Howard (1906-1936) describe the mythical Hyborian Age and its greatest hero, Conan the Barbarian, in *Conan the Conqueror* (1950). This immortal character made his television debut in September. CONAN THE ADVENTURER will attempt to redefine Robert E. Howard's hero from pulp fiction barbarian to small screen adventurer, or, as press materials state, "as he leads his army of warriors on their quest to free their homeland of Cimmeria from the oppressive, tyrannic rule of the all-powerful sorcerer, Hissah Zul (Jeremy Kemp)." Former Mr. Universe Ralf Moeller will play Conan; supervising producer for the series is Burton Armus (STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION), with Peter Chesney (MEN IN BLACK) serving as effects producer.

"Conan will fight monsters and bad guys; he will fall in love," said Moeller, "but he's a bit more civilized because now



Schwarzenegger protege Ralf Moeller, another body-builder-turned-actor, plays Robert E. Howard's hero in the syndicated series on most UPN stations.

he's grown up, and is in charge." Conan is aided in his crusade by three companions: Otli (Danny Woodburn) the dwarf; Zzeben (Robert McRay), a hot-tempered mute; and Vulkar (Andrew Craig), a lusty bear-like fighter dubbed "Conan's Little John." Conan's lust/hate relationship with the bandit queen Karella (Aly Dunne) will further complicate his life.

The series was launched with a pilot that promises everything necessary for an action-adventure romp, including an evil sorcerer, pitfighting, peasant uprising, magic, werewolves, mummies, bandit queen, giant spider and even a vignette from Howard's tale "The Tower of the Elephant."

Moeller's break came when he ran into producer Mark Canton at Arnold Schwarzenegger's Santa Monica restaurant, Schatzi's, on Cigar Night. Canton wanted to put together a Conan feature film with Columbia and director John Milius, until they learned from Howard estate executor, Arthur Lieberman, that Keller Entertainment had optioned the television rights. Fortunately for Moeller, the Kellers were willing to consider him for the lead, and he garnered a screen test in January 1997. After several callbacks, he won the role and was soon promoting the product at industry conventions like NATPE and AFM. Conan will air domestically in syndication.

Shooting for CONAN THE ADVENTURER began June 16 in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, with some second unit work being shot in Romania. "The idea is to

work six months with the television series, twenty-two episodes," Moeller said, "and then the next six months, to do a feature film, and work on becoming a movie star." Moeller laughed lightly as he finished the sentence, as if amused by the matter-of-factness of this star-making enterprise.

Moeller has invested many years in achieving his dream, and brings the same diligence to his film aspirations that he devoted to his bodybuilding career, a venture that required six years of six-hour-a-day workouts to reach his peak. The six-foot-six, 275-pound Teuton titan, a former competitive swimmer and boxer, worked his way to the top from a junior championship, followed by the German championship in 1983, before becoming the first steroid-free Mr. Universe in 1986.

If all this sounds reminiscent of another European bodybuilder, the parallels continue. After meeting his role model, Arnold Schwarzenegger, at the premiere of *CONAN THE BARBARIAN* (1982) in Essen, Germany, Moeller stayed in touch with the superstar, who was to become a close friend and mentor.

When Moeller followed Schwarzenegger's lead to Hollywood in 1991, he had an edge: lucrative endorsement contracts with European companies like Mercedes Benz, which allowed him to take his time and be choosy about his roles. The road to boxoffice glory is littered with the aspirations of dozens of would-be action stars, and Moeller was determined not to join their number.

Moeller launched his career with a bang as the lead villain in *BEST OF THE BEST II* (1993), a martial arts flick with Eric Roberts and Wayne Newton, in which he starred as Brakus, the villainous owner and star attraction of "The Coliseum," an underground, to-the-death Las Vegas fighting arena. He followed this with a role as GR76, a "Unisol" heavy in *UNIVERSAL SOLDIER* (1994) with Dolph Lundgren and Jean-



Unlike Howard's Conan, who was a loner, the TV version has hangers-on (l to r): Vulkar (Andrew Craig), Otil (Danny Woodburn), Karella (Aly Dunne) and Zzeben (Robert McRay).

Claude Van Damme.

Seeking to avoid typecasting as a villain, Moeller turned down an offer to play Zangief, the villainous General Bison's (the late Raul Julia) chief henchman in 1994's *STREET-FIGHTER*, and chose the lead in *VIKING SAGAS* (1996) as his next role. The straight-to-video release, the directoral debut of Oscar-nominated cinematographer Michael Chapman (*RAGING BULL*, *THE FUGITIVE*), featured a Viking warrior out to avenge his father's death. "With a budget of six million, but no boat, it's like a Western without horses," Moeller commented. "Everyone worked really hard on it . . . but two years ago, I was not prepared [enough] as an actor."

Though striving to avoid inconsequential roles, Moeller couldn't resist a brief turn with his buddy, Schwarzenegger, in *BAT-*

MAN AND ROBIN (1997), in a blink-and-you-missed it cameo as a guard at the Arkham Asylum. "I play the head of the guards; we torment [Schwarzenegger's character] Mr. Freeze a little bit, and then Poison Ivy [Uma Thurman] breaks in and I get the kiss of death," he chuckled.

"Spending two hours in Arnold's trailer is like spending a year in Hollywood; you learn a lot," said Moeller, of his friend's influence. However, the bodybuilder *cum* actor recognizes that he must carve out an identity beyond that of an Arnold Schwarzenegger clone in order to succeed. "You can have an idol, but you have to develop your own personality," Moeller asserted, and he's striving to do just that.

Moeller's daily pre-season training regimen commences with a 6:00 a.m. wake-up call, followed by a 90-minute workout. After a healthy breakfast, it

was time for martial arts training with instructor Kiyoshi Yamazaki (Schwarzenegger's trainer for his *Conan* and *Red Sonja* movies). Afternoons consist of horseback riding, acting lessons, and more working out.

Moeller, who resides in Southern California's tony Pacific Palisades zip code, does manage to find free time for his family, consisting of his wife, Annette, and seven-year-old daughter. They will be joined in October by the couple's second child. "It has been a year of production," joked Moeller. Moeller's hobbies include riding his Harley, playing tennis, scuba diving, and spending time with family, hiking, or at the beach; he also enjoys a good cigar. The expansive Moeller is on track to becoming an über-patriot. "We absolutely love America," he enthused, bullish on the unlimited potential he sees for his film career.

CONAN THE ADVENTURER won't succeed in the crowded genre marketplace solely on Moeller's charisma, however. *TARZAN: THE EPIC ADVENTURES*, produced by Conan executive producers Max and Michelle Keller, was the first of

the *HERCULES* clones to be declared a casualty. Whether the Kellers can succeed with Conan after nine years of failure in their attempts to launch a *TARZAN* series remains to be seen.

Perhaps in a preemptive bid to avoid comparisons to the behemoth that is the *HERCULES/XENA* phenomenon, press materials for the show invoke *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* as the series' model.

The ultimate question: is the musclebound, physically domineering hero obsolete in an era where actors like Nicholas Cage and Will Smith reinterpret the action-star role as a quick-witted, resourceful Everyman? Moeller doesn't think so. As our conversation winds down, he commented, "After our interview, I will go and work out again, so that we can bring some muscles back to the screen." □

This deceptive GAME is definitely worth playing.

THE GAME

A Polygram Films release of a Polygram Filmed Entertainment presentation of a Propaganda Films production. Produced by Steve Golin, Cean Chaffin. Directed by David Fincher. Written by John Brancato & Michael Ferris. Cinematography (Technicolor, Panavision): Harris Savides. Editor: James Haygood. Music: Howard Shore. Production design: Jeffrey Beecroft; supervising art director, Jim Murakami; art direction, Steven Saklad; set design, Alan Kaye, set decoration, Jackie Carr. Costume design: Michael Kaplan. Sound (DTS/DOLBY SR/SDDS), Willie Burton; sound design, Ren Klyce. Visual effects supervisor: Kevin Haug. Executive producer: Jonathan Mostow. Co-producers: John Brancato & Michael Ferris. 9/97, 128 mins, R.

Nicholas Van Orton.....Michael Douglas
Conrad Van Orton.....Sean Penn
Christine.....Deborah Kara Unger
Jim Feingold.....James Rebhorn
Samuel Sutherland.....Peter Donat
Ilsa.....Caroll Baker
Elizabeth.....Anna Katarina
Anson Baer.....Armin Mueller-Stahl

by Patricia Moir

Michael Douglas has more or less built the latter portion of his acting career on portrayals of wealthy, powerful men struggling with exceptional circumstances. Whether these characters are endearing (as in *THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT*) or villainous (as in his Oscar-winning performance in *WALL STREET*), they have always seemed to me to be curiously unconvincing, a bit too consistent to fully capture either my imagination or my sympathy. (This is really not Douglas' fault; his full range has only been demonstrated, unfortunately, in otherwise flawed films like *FALLING DOWN*, or the even more abysmal *RUNNING*.)

Nicholas Van Orton, Douglas' lead character in *THE GAME*, seems at first to be yet another two-dimensional portrait of monied privilege. Driven only by financial concerns (his sole recreation consists of watching the Cable Financial Network), isolated from human contact, and insulated from life's hard knocks behind the fortress-like walls of his home and office, Van Orton might have been the most unsympathetic character of Douglas' entire oeuvre to date—might have been, that is, were it not for the clever writing of John Brancato and Michael Ferris, which, combined with David Fincher's superb direction, gives Douglas the role of a lifetime, allowing him to take his character through a series of subtle yet ultimately devastating transformations and explore a vast range of motivations and conflicts in the process.

The concept of *THE GAME* is simple enough: on Van Orton's



THE GAME begins for Nicholas Van Orton (Michael Douglas) when a mysterious puppet is left on his property. But what is the objective?

forty-eighth birthday, his black sheep younger brother, Conrad (Sean Penn), presents him with an unusual gift, a game "specifically tailored for each participant" which promises to "provide whatever's lacking" in the player's life. Scornful of such fantastic pursuits, Van Orton initially dismisses the whole matter, but when he begins to hear intriguing rumors about the Game's effectiveness, he relents and undergoes an exhaustive battery of psychological and physical tests to enroll as a player, setting in motion a series of *TWILIGHT ZONE*-like events over which he has no control.

Lack of control, is, of course, the whole point of the matter, for Van Orton's life is about control—of money, of corporations, of people, and, above all else, control of emotion. A series of economical flashbacks allows us to see the reasons for this: after his father's suicide (at the significant age of 48), Van Orton's role has been that of caretaker, watching over his mother, his brother, and the family empire, leaving little room for regrets or the sort of emotional weakness which drove his father to his death. The Game delivers on its promise to provide that which is lacking in

the life of the man who has everything, dishing out liberal doses of humiliation and danger, forcing Van Orton to experience the feelings of helplessness, confusion, and fear from which he has been artificially protected.

Like Van Orton, the audience is kept in a state of confusion, never knowing when events are real or when they are part of the elaborate fantasy role-playing Game. Is the waitress at Van Orton's club (Deborah Kara Unger, of *CRASH*) a minor player or one of the "authors" of the Game? Is Van Orton's ex-wife in on it, too? His lawyer? Is Conrad part of the plot, or is he another helpless victim of the Game's machinations? When Van Orton attempts to take matters into his own hands, is he really fighting back, or are his actions merely planned reactions to the Game's clever manipulations? Finding out the answers to these questions is not, ultimately, the real goal for Van Orton; but for viewers, even those expert second-guessers of mystery plots, it's a fascinating puzzle with a truly surprising ending.

Visually, also, *THE GAME* is intensely satisfying. Production designer Jeffrey Beecroft has lav-

ished extraordinary attention on the details, and cinematographer Harris Savides' camera lingers on every texture of Van Orton's luxuriously fitted, soon-to-beshattered life. This visual richness is important, for it is in the details that we begin to perceive Van Orton's personal milieu for what it truly is—a world no less fantastic or artificial or carefully constructed than that of the Game itself. In entering one game, Van Orton leaves another—questioning, for the first time, the validity of his own reality.

THE GAME is so much fun to watch that it's tempting to search for deeper meanings beneath the obvious and simplistic story of Van Orton's re-humanization. I am somewhat sorry to have to say that that is as deep as this film goes; *THE GAME*'s theme becomes quite evident about a third of the way through, and doesn't develop much beyond that point. Meaning has been sacrificed in the interest of plot development, and, while that plot is more than enough to engage an audience during the film, one can't help feeling just a bit disappointed afterwards.

Still, I highly recommend *THE GAME*, for though it will never be considered one of the great films, it will surely be remembered for one of the great performances. This is really Michael Douglas' movie; it's hard to imagine a role that would place more demands on an actor, and he meets the challenge beautifully. Douglas shows us a man whose raging impatience masks a fear of feeling, whose rejection of pleasure is merely a defense against the possibility of not being pleased. When the Game begins and Van Orton finds himself swept up in its action, he smiles briefly, hesitantly, as though discovering that there may be such a thing as fun, after all. And, when he is reduced, finally, to depending on the mercy of others in order to survive, the discovery of his own fragility is evident in his face, his gestures, even his walk. Although the plot of *THE GAME* can't survive more than one viewing, Douglas' performance is worthy of more than one look, and considerably more worthy of awards than anything he has done before. □

FILM RATINGS

●●●●	Must see
●●●	Excellent
●●	Good
●	Mediocre
○	Fodder for MST-3K

DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

Director: Taylor Hackford. Screenplay: Jonathan Lemkin and Tony Gilroy, based on the novel by Andrew Neiderman. Warners, 10/97. 144 mins. R. With: Al Pacino, Keanu Reeves, Charlize Theron, Jeffrey Jones, Craig T. Stevens.

This is a fairly sophisticated, witty take on a premise that could have been just a stupid joke: a hot-shot defense attorney (Reeves) finds out he's working for the Devil (Pacino). Long before the supernatural element fully reveals itself, the clever dialogue has been dropping hints: "The only thing worse than having no father was having my father," says Mary Ann (Theron), to which Pacino's John Milton sympathetically replies, "I can relate." Likewise, director Taylor Hackford knows how to build to his climax, using memorable images to emphasize dramatic moments, showing us flashing glimpses of the uncanny, and then finally revealing some well-integrated special effects to sell viewers on the demonic nature of the proceedings. Pacino gives an ecstatically enjoyable performance—at first subtle, sly and amusing, before pulling out all the stops. Reeves, conversely, plays an excellent straight man as the lawyer whose vanity endangers his soul. ●●● Steve Biodrowski

GATTACA

Director-writer: Andrew Niccol. Columbia, 10/97. PG-13. 112 mins. With: Ethan Hawke, Uma Thurman, Alan Arkin, Jude Law, Gore Vidal, Ernest Borgnine.

These are the kinds of dreams one has when dozing off during a marathon showing of HOWARD'S END, THE RIGHT STUFF, and MURDER, MY SWEET: handsome, business-suited space-travelers rocketing into the cosmos; Uma Thurman as a genetically perfect ice-queen with a secret passion for watching the sun rise over solar collectors; Ethan Hawke as a biologically ostracized "in-valid" determined to join the space-going elite, even if it means resorting to surgical alteration, concealed blood vials, and (possibly) murder to achieve his goals. Writer-director Niccol wants to draw parallels between the Merchant/Ivory drama—all class striation and discreet hypocrisy—and a future in which your genes buy you entry into a life of luxury or doom you to a world of menial labor. But his settings are less elegant than sterile (symmetry kills, Andy), and his biological upper-class—portrayed without the subtle vitriol that Messrs. Merchant and Ivory bring to their works—come off as elegant, smug, and insufferably boring. Wise in recognizing what dangers await us should genetic testing become the engine that drives society, GATTACA is more interesting to think about than it actually watch. ● Dan Persons

A LIFE LESS ORDINARY

Director: Danny Boyle. Writer: John Hodge. Fox, 10/97. 103 mins. With: Ewan McGregor, Cameron Diaz, Holly Hunter, Delroy Lindo, Dan Hedaya, Ian Holm.

A LIFE LESS ORDINARY is one of the most interesting romantic comedies in years, combining elements of film noir, road movies, and fantasy; it doesn't quite come together in the end, but it scores more hits than misses. Up in heaven, two celestial cops (Hunter and Lindo) have been assigned to bring together an unlikely twosome: Robert (McGregor), a loser who works as a janitor and spends most of his timing talking about the trash novel he plans to write (about the illegitimate daughter of John F. Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe); and Celine (Diaz), the beautiful, bored, and spoiled daughter of Robert's boss (Holm), whose idea of kicks is shooting apples off people's heads. A union seems impossible, until Robert somewhat unintentionally kidnaps Celine.



Harland Williams is computer geek Fred Z. Randall, who joins the first flight to Mars in **ROCKET MAN**.

Soon, however, the two are off and running, as they try their hand at robbing banks, dancing at Karaoke bars, and fleeing from their pursuers, while all of heaven waits to see whether love will really conquer all. That the film works is due to the fine direction by Danny Boyle and a strong story by John Hodge. Boyle is excellent at staging car crashes, fantasy dances, and shootouts with ease. Although some of the violent elements are a bit graphic, the audience knows there's often no real danger (thanks to the otherworldly involvement) and takes it in stride.

However, the ups, downs, and shifts eventually become a bit tiresome (there are at least five possible endings), and there are several "jumps" from scene to scene which leave audiences to figure out what happened. The camera work, with a lot of tight shots, though interesting, gives a claustrophobic feeling, especially in the beginning. More art house favorite than a mainstream hit, this film succeeds by never taking itself too seriously and inviting audiences to come along for the ride. It's not always clear how it gets from point A to B, but the journey is worth the price of admission. ●●● Judd Hollander & Sue Feinberg

ROCKET MAN

Director: Stuart Gillard. Writers: Craig Mazin & Greg Erb. Disney, 10/97. 93 mins. PG. With: Harland Williams, Jessica Lundy, William Sadler, Beau Bridges, Shelley Duval.

Heads should roll at Disney over this abysmal failure—an apparent attempt to create a star vehicle for Harland Williams (someone seems to think he's the next Jim Carrey). The thin story is short on comical plot complications; instead, almost every scene is set up as a showcase for the actor, who bores us with his "zany" routines, including endless impersonations and snatches of popular songs. Incredibly, all this nonsense is not only supposed to make us laugh at the character's idiocy; we're also supposed to find him endearing, intelligent, and ultimately courageous. (BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD DO AMERICA may not have been the height of subtle comedy, but at least Mike Judge had more sense than to try to convince us that his repulsive morons were actually romantic heroes.) The result is a major studio film that plays like a self-financed vanity project—and just why, in God's name, are fine talents like Shelley Duval, Beau Bridges, and William Sanderson playing

supporting roles to this would-be star?

As if the script weren't bad enough, the direction tries to force comic punch lines that just aren't there, leaving the cast visibly straining for laughs. The overall execution is so lackadaisical that one can only assume the filmmakers were aiming squarely at the eight-year-olds audience, and therefore believed that filmic competence would not be required. For a studio that caters to the family audience this was a big mistake—not to mention an insult to the average eight-year-old's intelligence. ○ Steve Biodrowski

STARSHIP TROOPERS

Director: Paul Verhoeven. Screenplay: Ed Neumeier, from the novel by Robert Heinlein. TriStar, 11/97. R. With: Casper Van Dien, Dina Meyer, Jake Busey, Michael Ironside, Clancy Brown.

Easily the best major studio genre film of the year, this exciting, satirical effort re-establishes Paul Verhoeven as a major talent after the ill-conceived SHOWGIRLS. Ed Neumeier's script is cleverly structured to eat its cake and have it too: the story seduces you into buying into the Fascist future that Robert Heinlein advanced with a straight face; then Neumeier pulls the rug out from under you with a series of sly jabs at the status quo, most obviously in the form of the outrageous propaganda conveyed in the Fed Net news bites. Verhoeven rises to the material brilliantly. After the first hour, he has you wanting to enlist in the war on bugs yourself, in eager anticipation of the glories of victory; then he hits you over the head with graphic depiction of the carnage that shock you out of the gung-ho sensibility into which you have been lulled. The CGI (by Phil Tippett) is some of the best ever; and the cast (young and old) deliver memorable characterizations. This is a fully realized piece of work that delivers on all levels. ●●● Steve Biodrowski

MADE-FOR-TELEVISION

SNOW WHITE: A TALE OF TERROR

Director: Michael Cohn. Writers: Tom Szollosi, Deborah Serra. Showtime, 8/97. 135 mins. With: Sigourney Weaver, Sam Neill, Monica Keena.

This ain't your grandparents' SNOW WHITE. The subtitle is "A TALE OF TERROR", and there is much to be frightened of in this handsomely mounted tale of vanity, hatred, passion and love: the subject matter includes hints of such niceties as cannibalism, incest, butchery, and good old-fashioned murder. Threat and menace are everywhere, and nowhere is it more perfect than in Weaver's performance. Her multi-layered Claudia is a formidable menace from the moment she steps on screen, but Weaver doesn't stop there. Her character is consumed not only with hatred for her step-daughter Lilli (Keena); she harbors an all-encompassing self-esteem complex that is positively deadly to everyone around her. Weaver is sexy, vicious, horrible and captivating all at once, and her portrayal of the old hag who gives Lilli the poisoned apple is a scene-stealer all its own.

Keena is also quite wonderful. Her lovely eyes widen at the horror around her, but she never denigrates into the passive victim. There is always a strength about her that makes the character and the overall film much more entertaining than the classic interpretation of the story by you-know-who.

The basic story remains the same (except for the dwarfs who are re-imagined as social outcasts), and director Cohn and writers Szollosi and Serra let the tale tell itself, rather than wrapping it in blood and CGI. The occasional show-stopping effects scenes (the cave-in of the outcasts' mine and Claudia's ultimate fate) are carried out with chilling effect, but more so because this film took time to know its people and layer their psyches. There is much that was dark and horrific in the fairy tales of youth, and here is a production that wasn't afraid to acknowledge an integral part of world culture by refusing to sugarcoat for the masses and thus keeping the wonderfully Grimm charms intact. ●●● Frederick C. Szabin

BORDERLAND

By Anthony P. Montesano

THE PEACEMAKER DreamWorks' Generic Action Pic #1

During the Cold War, speculative horrific fantasy films such as *THE DAY AFTER* and *BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES* explored the notion of world destruction by nuclear weapons. Victims who had not been reduced to dust were left to die slow agonizing deaths, with their skin peeling off and their intestines melting inside from radioactive contamination.

A few minutes into *THE PEACEMAKER* (DreamWorks, 9/97, 122 mins, R), a nuclear bomb explodes. Let me repeat that: *A nuclear bomb explodes.* Directly following the incident, a news report ominously declares how the fallout from the explosion will effect "all of Russia and most of Eastern Europe." One character proclaims that this is a thousand times worse than Chernobyl. And then...nothing. The fallout is forgotten. No special suits. No worry of contamination, even though most of the film takes place...where? That's right, in Eastern Europe and Russia. It has been argued that the true horror of nuclear weapons has been down-played in films due to a universal sense of guilt, but to suggest that is why the bomb is treated so unrealistically in *THE PEACEMAKER* would be, I believe, giving the film too much credit.

I'm still trying to figure out why DreamWorks studio heads Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg, and David Geffen chose *THE PEACEMAKER* to be their inaugural release. The film is an irresponsible, unfocused and insulting mess. *THE PEACEMAKER* is cookie-cutter filmmaking at its worst, strewn with sexist cliches and an amazing lack of character development. Few can dispute Steven Spielberg's talent as a director, but his track record as a producer (*THE GOONIES*, **BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED*) has been less than stellar. This first effort as a studio chief offers little hope that will change.

THE PEACEMAKER is really two films disjointedly pieced together: One, a soulful, earnest study of war-torn Bosnia, complete with a melancholy acoustic piano score and touching scenes of children playing among the rubble of bombed-out tenements; the other, a military jingoistic, underdeveloped Rambo/James Bond-



Nicole Kidman and George Clooney star in *THE PEACEMAKER*, the dumb DreamWorks debut that speculates on the possibility of nuclear terrorism.

wannabe with a blaring orchestral soundtrack and over-the-top nonsensical action. The latter film insults its audience by having us believe that if its characters say "important-sounding things" very fast and then immediately run around and "do something," it will make their statements ultra-realistic. The most blatant example of this is the film's finale in New York. You try setting a timer to explode a nuclear bomb in your backpack in ten minutes, then stroll through Midtown walking ten blocks downtown and six avenues over, hop in and out of a cab, get caught up in midday traffic and see what happens to you. Ka-boom! That's what. You wouldn't even make it two blocks.

George Clooney's macho soldier who justifies a lot of his headstrong, violent action by continually spouting platitudes about being in the "real world" and how he's one of "the good guys" is supposed to exude bravado, but he turns out to be a foul-mouthed creep. The film does nothing to support his claims. His world isn't the real world; it's a movie-version of the real world where explosions don't hurt the good guys and terrorists conveniently leave a paper trail of truck rental receipts, bank statements and clues such as "E44" on a shipping slip to indicate where they're going to strike next. "My God," gasps Nicole Kidman's character at just the right moment, "they're gonna blow up

the United Nations."

A colleague of mine pointed out recently that as special effects continue to improve, bombs in films are no longer nasty devices that rip people to shreds but rather, (in movies like *MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE*, *DIE HARD II*, *DAYLIGHT* and now *THE PEACEMAKER*) are simply a more convenient mode of transportation. Need to get across the street in a hurry? No problem. Set off a grenade and pop right on over. Perhaps the screenwriter of *THE PEACEMAKER* studied at the Wyle E. Coyote school of physics. Ka-boom! Splat! Then dust yourself off and try all over again.

Speaking of freaky physics, a quick word about *THE GAME*, an excellent Twilight Zone-inspired idea that crumbles when it too doesn't respect the guidelines within which it works. No matter how fantastical a situation you are presented, suspension of disbelief requires one simple factor to succeed: If the creators are true to their own framework, you the audience will be willing to buy what they're selling. Rod Serling had an impeccable sense of this. Likewise *THE GAME*, but only to a point. And when that point is violated, the film collapses. Of course, the film could be viewed as an inside joke on filmmaking itself, but it gives no indication that it would like to be perceived that way. As played, *THE GAME*

leaves the audience feeling like the loser in a technologically sophisticated version of Three Card Monty.

The spirit of Rod Serling also manifests itself in *U-TURN* (Universal, 10/97, 125 mins, R), a cross between *DOC HOLLYWOOD* and *2000 MANIACS*. Here, director Oliver Stone returns to the themes of his blood-splattered ode to American evil, *NATURAL BORN KILLERS*. Years of isolation from the outside world have fermented a number of demented residents in Superior, Arizona (brilliantly portrayed by Jon Voight, Billy Bob Thornton, Claire Danes, and Nick Nolte). But as with *2000 MANIACS*, one wonders what to take from *U-TURN*. At least Hershel Gordon Lewis' schlock effort was pure exploitation (which spilled over into unintentional camp); *U-TURN*, however, is exploitation masquerading as something else—social commentary. Unfortunately, as in *NBK*, Stone gives the audience no one with whom to identify: we learn the stranger who stumbles into this town (Sean Penn) is every bit as insane as the locals. This is Norman Rockwell's America through a glass darkly. The only winners in this desert morality tale (devoid of morals) are the vultures gathering overhead.

Speaking of Norman Rockwell, *IN & OUT* (Paramount 9/97, 92 mins, PG-13), directed by Yoda himself, Frank Oz, could be the first gay-themed film to (successfully) bathe itself in Norman Rockwell Americana. The dramatic tension of this enjoyable satire surrounds a small town high school teacher (Kevin Kline) who is "outed" by a former student (Matt Dillon) during an Oscar telecast. While struggling with his own sexuality before his wedding, Kline's teacher—in the film's funniest scene—listens to self-help tapes to get "in touch" with his masculine side. The scene bends reality as the hilariously belligerent taped voice begins to talk back to Kline (a la Warner Bros. cartoons wherein the narrator would interact with the main character). This scene builds to a frenzied pitch adding just the right touch of fantasy to a film which takes a rather idyllic look at gay life in small town America. □

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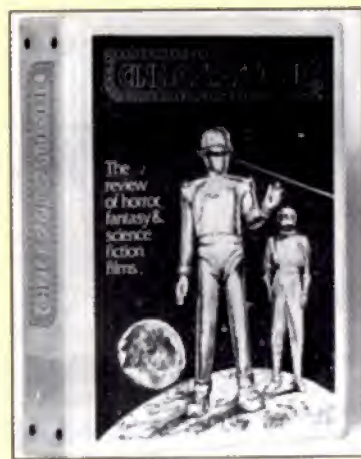
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Volume 19 Number 5

The James Bond adventure *LICENCE TO KILL* is the cover story of this dynamic issue, with Timothy Dalton as secret agent 007, flanked by Bond girl Carey Lowell. A closeup look at the scriptwriting, directing, women, weapons, marketing, and the family enterprise behind the enduring Bond franchise. **\$8.00**

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DEEP RISING

continued from page 7

close to 70 effects shots, at least 40 of which were of the beast. "I think it's important to understand that this show is very diverse in terms of effects," said Shea. "We had large scale miniatures that we exploded, a lot of motion control miniatures there were smaller scale and we had the creature. Probably the most challenging CG part of this show was creating a believable monster that had to continuously ravage the ship for 90 minutes. It is constantly evolving throughout the picture, and we see it a number of times so we had to keep it interesting all the way along, to make sure that it was always scary."

Huante noted that "although CGI is a very good tool to assist physical construction, it shouldn't replace it. Ray Harryhausen said that, too: that it's a very good tool. He's the special effects godfather. But he's said that CGI would never be the end-all of special effects. Harryhausen is the reason I got into the business. He's the master."

Doing *MEN IN BLACK* and

DEEP RISING, Huante has found he's sculpting more. "When I first got into the business, I got in through animation, and was drawing a lot, but I really wanted to get into special effects. Sometimes the directors or producers can't understand what you're really trying to say in 2D, and then when you show them a 3D model, they [get it] 'Oh, yeah, this is really something.' It helps people to see something in 3D."

Thinking of his work as an illustrator, a "2D artist," Huante realizes that you "have to accept the fact that it's going to go through different hands. But as long as my part is done the best I can possibly do it, I enjoy having it as a portfolio piece, and I can show people. But once in a while, you see something that was taken from your drawing and done even better; they've really embellished it."

Huante has appreciated working with Bottin. "The guy is the monsterman," he said. "And it will be interesting to see at the end what this creature will look like. You don't know until it's on film. I'm as excited as anyone to see what the thing will look like."

FLEMING'S BOND

continued from page 29

with flares to track him. He then realized that the crackers were to convince any curious observers that they were celebrating Christmas Eve, and that he had totally forgotten that the holiday season was upon him. On the way down the mountain, Bond had to kill about four men. He then had to join a Swiss party that was open to the public to hide from more killers in the crowd of celebrants. Later that evening Bond caused a fatal car wreck for some of his pursuers on an icy mountain road. Bond was aware that while the rest of the world was celebrating the eve of a holiday of peace, he was alone in the cold darkness, running for his life, killing one man after another.

Although a keen awareness of his surroundings would seem to be necessary for survival, what made Bond seem even more alienated was whenever he dreamed of his retirement. Bond dreamed of a retirement to isolation, a small farmhouse or cottage, with no one else present—not even a special woman. James

Bond is the spy who cannot come in from the cold.

90s BOND

continued from page 31

pect more of the lurches into pure cinema and unabashed slapstick (as when *GOLDENEYE* turns into a *NAKED GUN*-style spoof of itself with backframe sight gags of an agent pinned by an exploding air bag in a phone booth).

A winning formula can be a straightjacket as well as meal ticket. Trapped by conventions and overtaken by history, the Bond franchise was flat on its back with a laser inching up towards its vital parts. With so much at stake—not the future of humanity, but several hundred millions of dollars of worldwide grosses—death was never really an option. With the geo- and gender politics finessed, with the whole planet a stage for fantastic stunts and supermodel recruitment, and with Pierce Brosnan revitalizing a tired figure in mid-life crisis, James Bond won't have to chose his next witticism too carefully. It won't be his last.

LETTERS

HORROR—BOOM OR BUST?

John Thonen's piece on the death of horror [29: 4/5: 80] had a few omissions.

Films like *RELIC* and *ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU '96* lost money because they were lousy. Rude, crude, and ugly, they had none of the camp appeal of *ANACONDA* or *SCREAM*, which made money because they were good. Furthermore, the fact that films as bad as *RELIC* and *MOREAU '96* each cost in excess of \$60 million to produce is shocking and shameful. And the \$30 million taken in by *FRIGHTENERS* is certainly comparable to grosses taken in by Hammer and AIP in their heyday, when one takes inflation and the changing value of the dollar into consideration. Is there any reason why a B film like *FRIGHTENERS* had to also cost more than \$60 million to produce?

The horror genre will remain dead until producers stop spending so much money on unwatchable films. When they learn to spend less on better product, as Hammer and AIP did in their heyday, the genre will bounce back.

Got to go now. There's a Hammer festival on Cinemax this week, and I'd rather watch that than a piece of shit like *MOREAU '96* any day.

—Mr. David A. Nahmod
New York, NY

X-FILES I.D.

While we appreciate that you included photos of our client Harrison Coe in your X-FILES article/October issue, [29:4/5] it was disappointing that he did not receive any credit. Coe appears with Justine Miceli in the photos on pages 39 and 57. His name was not included in the photo caption or the article—only his character name. His role was very substantial.

You may want to take note of this for future photos that you print as there is a very strong Professional Acting community in Vancouver where many of these series are shot.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

—Lisa King
King Talent Incorporated
via email

OSCAR'S GENRE SNUBBING EXPLAINED

Your articles on Oscar and genre films [28:10:42] overlooks some historical background relating to why genre films have been ignored until recently. The prime mover behind the founding of the Academy was Louis B. Mayer, the biggest snob and social climber in early Hollywood history. Despite the inclusion of "art" in the organization's name, Mayer did not really believe film was an art form on the same level as "great" literature. Unfortunately most of the others inducted into the Academy in those days had been indoctrinated by the American educational system to also accept that belief. Thus best picture nominees and winners were more likely to be chosen by how close they adhered to standards derived from "great literature" or "great drama" than as true works of cinematic art.

As noted, genre films would sometimes win in the "technical" areas, especially after the Special Effects Award was instituted, but it was not until the last 20 years or so, with the induction of younger members who accept and respect film as an art form in its own right, that genre films and those who make them have won serious consideration.

—Rick Mitchell
Film Editor/Director/Historian
to *American Cinematographer* and
Films In Review

PETER CUSHING, A CLASS ACT

I am writing to commend you on the fine article about the late Peter Cushing [28:9:38]. I believe that recognition of this great actor and his many talents is long overdue. You are one of the few magazines that took care to write something about him during the re-release of the special edition of *STAR WARS*. George Lucas didn't even put Cushing in the previews, as well as not even mentioning his name in recent interviews, showing a considerable amount of disrespect. Without Cushing's presence *STAR WARS* would have been a movie about a series of senseless space fights. From his introduction, Tarkin was the character who provided the story with his evil ambitions that became the pivotal link to the motivations and actions of the

other characters until the conclusion of the film. George Lucas owes an immense debt to this fine actor. Again, my sincere thanks to Bill Kelley for writing it and to you, *Cinefantastique*, for publishing it. A job well done.

—Steve Hollie
St. Louis, MO

[Kelley's career retrospect on *Cushing* will become a future cover-story.]

STORYBOARD ARTIST KICKS OUR ASTEROID

As Director Bradford May was quick to point out in his interview [28:9:44] storyboard artists were essential to the production and design of *ASTEROID*. As one of the two artists who worked on the show—the other being Martin Mercer—I feel it necessary to point out that the photo you printed in your article [page 46] was reversed and the caption incorrect; Brad May is pictured on the right, Sam Nicholson on the left. Peter Ware is nowhere in sight.

—Steve Werblun
Santa Clarita, CA

CORRECTIONS

In the October issue of *CFQ*, [29:4/5:64] the article on *DARK EMPIRE* indicates that Patrick Tatopoulos and Tatopoulos Design, Inc. are doing sets for *GODZILLA*. In actuality, Tatopoulos and Co. are the Creature Designers, performing design for *Godzilla* himself.

In Volume 28 No. 8 we neglected to credit Dee Bradley Baker for the voice characterizations of Daffy Duck, the Tasmanian Devil, the Bull, and the Road Runner in *SPACE JAM*. We incorrectly credited them to Danny Devito, who only did the voice of Swackhammer, the film's cartoon villain.

In the same issue, we misidentified actor Tom O'Brien, who played Sergeant Frish in the X-FILES episodes "Tempus Fugit" and "Max." Since author Paula Vitaris credited O'Brien as "Tom Collins" she suggests that perhaps she was *drinking* a Tom Collins when she wrote it.

Vitaris, however, stands by her assertion that O'Brien "catches perfectly the bearing of a military man."

We regret our errors. □

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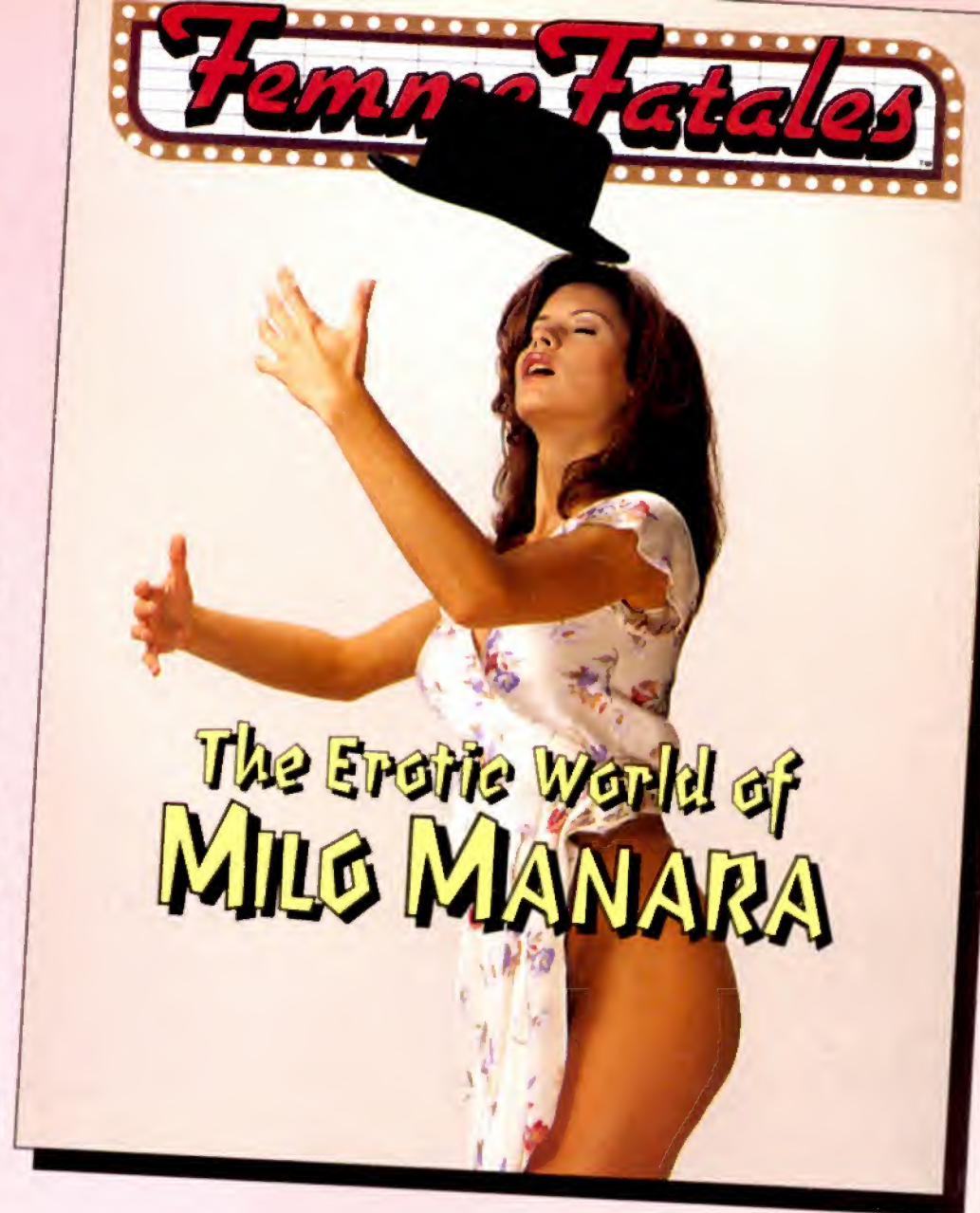
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And also in the same issue, black beauty N' Bushe Wright on starring opposite Wesley Snipes in BLADE, the Marvel Comics adaptation, an interview with Famke Janssen, GOLDENEYE'S femme fatale, on playing the sexy sharpshooter hunting for alien predators in DEEP RISING, Lisa Rinna and Sandra Hess on starring as the alluring femmes of NICK FURY: AGENT OF SHIELD, the Fox movie pilot based on the Marvel comics, starring David Hasselhoff, plus Molly Ringwald on her first horror film OFFICE KILLER, and a look at her distinguished career. Subscribe today!

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